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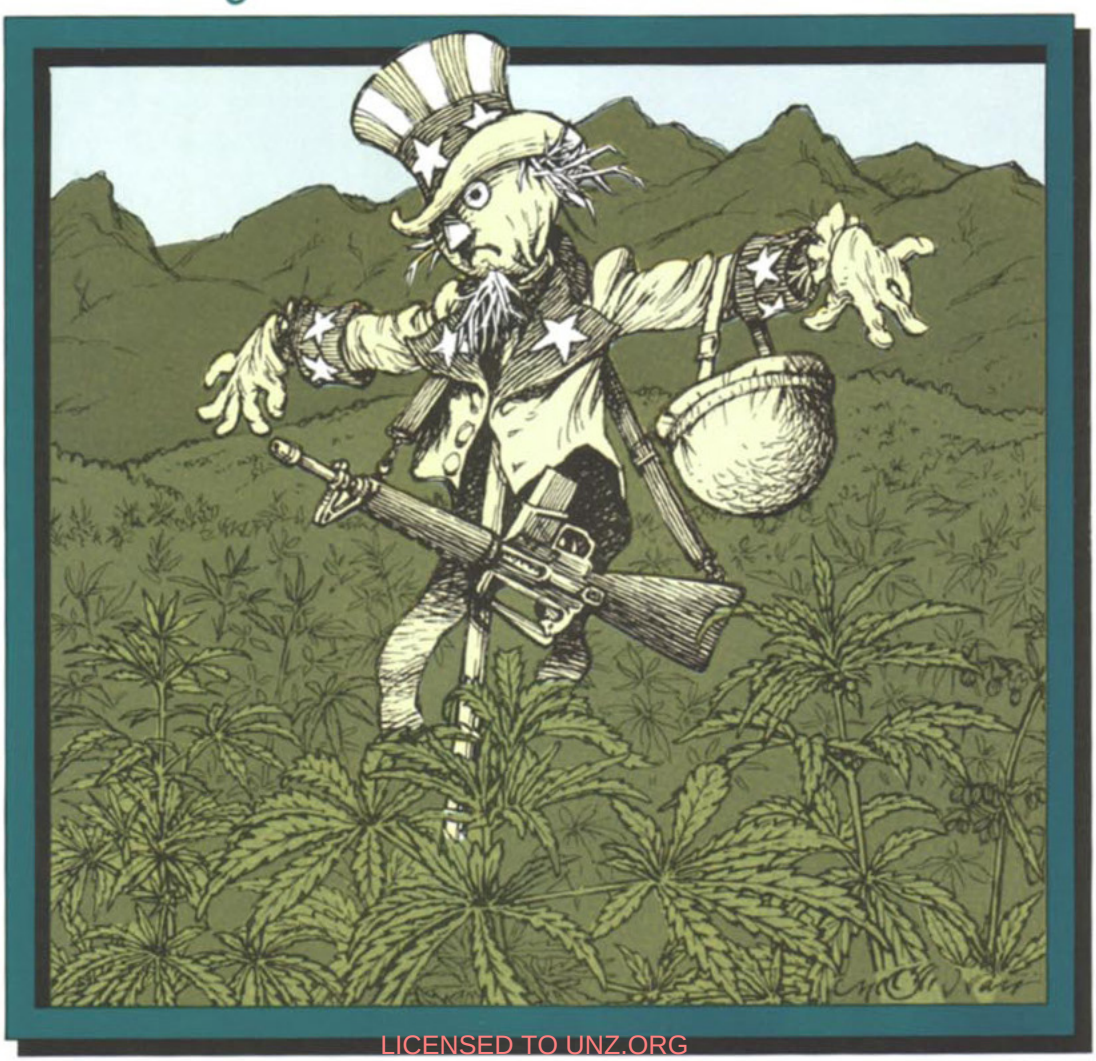
Inside the Small Scandal Administration

Reviews by Simon Leys & Donald Davie

MILITARIZING COLOMBIA

Uncle Sam in the Marijuana Patch

By PENNY LERNOUX



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- **Polygraphs for Employment:** Lie detectors detect physiological changes caused by stress. The polygrapher's questions, which show no respect for privacy, are enough to cause stress in any honest person.
- **Uncle Sam Listens In:** Secret wiretaps and bugs turn "unreasonable searches and seizures" upside down. The government first seizes all your words, then searches through them.
- **The Abuse of the Social Security Number:** The SSN is becoming an albatross around our necks, imprisoning all of us in our recorded pasts without any chance for a "fresh start."
- **The Private Security Industry:** Private police spy on customers in department store fitting rooms and bathrooms, watching for shoplifters. Thirty-one percent of them believe it is a crime if a customer calls them a pig.
- **Controlling Our Spies:** Radical surgery is needed to make the intelligence community work for democracy, not against it.
- **Psychological Testing of Students:** Fifth graders are being asked: If you were paralyzed in an auto accident, how much time would you spend blaming the driver, thinking about suicide, and trying to recuperate? Their answers are supposed to show if they possess "normal" beliefs and attitudes.
- **Privacy in the Military:** The right to privacy does exist in the military, although with searches, shakedowns, surveillance and drug-sniffing dog inspections you wouldn't know it.

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SEPTEMBER 30, 1979

Corrupting Colombia

PENNY LERNOUX **p. 13**

While the United States winks at marijuana use at home, its drug policies are undermining the political and economic foundations of Colombian democracy and leading the way toward a military takeover.

The Small Scandal Administration

LEONARD REED **p. 10**

Congress may complain about corruption in the Small Business Administration, but the agency is a school for scandal because Congress made it that way. What's the remedy for the SBA's problems? Only a wrecking ball will do.

COLUMNS & REVIEWS

Inquiries ..... **p. 3**

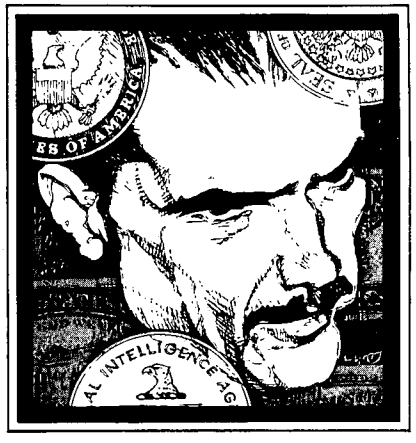
Nuclear socialism; Making Michigan safe for Jimmy.

Letters ..... **p. 6**

Politics ..... **p. 7**

Georgetown's ivory tower for old spooks. If the foreign-policy line that comes out of the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies sounds suspiciously like that of the CIA and the Pentagon, there's a good reason.

(*FRED LANDIS*)



Books ..... **p. 20**

Jonathan Marshall on *Empire: The Life, Legend and Madness of Howard Hughes,* by Donald L. Barlett & James Steele; Donald Davie on *The Variorum Edition of the Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy,* edited by James Gibson; Simon Leys on *The Great Statuary of China,* by Victor Segalen; Marina Warner on *Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft,* edited by Ralph M. Wardle; David Gordon on *For Capital Punishment,* by Walter Berns; and David Brudnoy on *Giving up the Gun: Japan's Reversion to the Sword, 1543–1879,* by Noel Perrin.

Film ..... **p. 30**

Stephen Harvey reviews *Yanks,* directed by John Schlesinger, and *More American Graffiti,* directed by B. W. L. Norton.

INQUIRY MAGAZINE (USPS 439-090), Volume 2, Number 16, September 30, 1979. Published semimonthly except for January, June, July, and August, when monthly. INQUIRY is published by the Cato Institute, 1700 Montgomery St., San Francisco, CA 94111. Editorial and advertising offices: 1700 Montgomery St., San Francisco, CA 94111, (415) 433-4319. Second-class postage paid at Palo Alto, CA and additional mailing offices. Annual subscription price: $12.50; single copy price: $1.25. Overseas subscription price: $23.50 surface mail; $45.00 airmail. Send subscription requests and address corrections to: P.O. Box 2500, Menlo Park, CA 94025. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to P.O. Box 2500, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

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ISSN No. 0148-5008.

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

AN ITEM IN LEONARD Reed's dissection of the Small Business Administration in this issue caught my eye. SBA administrator A. Vernon Weaver has conceded, it seems, that less than 1 percent of the 3400 minority firms his agency has "aided" in the past ten years are still in business. Now, one could point out the obvious, which is that the purpose of the SBA is primarily to feed and clothe the families of the 4400 bureaucrats who work for it and not to aid small businesses. The question to be answered, though, is why the mortality rate for small business—not just those run by minorities—remains so high. It is time for enlightened minds to recognize that the government regulations and red tape that are processed relatively painlessly by big business are strangling potential competition from small firms and stagnating our economy.

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RES PUBLICA

It's good to see Henry telling the truth, for a change

■ [Henry] Kissinger . . . recommended [to the Foreign Relations Committee] that the Senate make the continuation of arms control negotiations conditional on "acceptable international behavior" by the Soviet Union and its "proxies" and that the Senate vote periodically on whether treaty talks under way should be continued. . . .

And when Senator Edward Zorinsky, Democrat of Nebraska, asked whether Mr. Kissinger would have approved of permitting the Senate to terminate treaty talks when he was in office, he said, "Probably not."

—New York Times, Aug. 1, 1979

"What Freedom Means to Me," by Ayatollah Khomeini

■ In a speech reported by the Teheran press today, [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini] . . . said: "When democrats talk about freedom, they are inspired by the superpowers. They want to lead our youth to places of corruption."

"You who want prostitution and freedom in every matter are intellectuals. . . . Those who want freedom want the freedom to have bars, brothels, casinos, opium, etc. But we want our youth to carve out a new period in history. We do not want intellectuals."

—New York Times, Aug. 26, 1979

How do you say "drop dead" in Spanish

■ The Office for Civil Rights, an arm of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has accused the New York State Department of Social Services of failing to provide bilingual services for Hispanic recipients of public assistance.

At the same time, the Social Security Administration, also a part of HEW, is being sued by two outside parties for its alleged failure to do precisely the same thing. The latter agency, however, contends that does not come under the law.

"We don't have to provide those kinds of services," Jim Brown, a spokesman for the Social Security Administration, said. "Our legal defense is sound."

—Los Angeles Times, Aug. 22, 1979

Remind us to shed a tear

■ Saudi Arabia's oil minister, Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, . . . accused industrial states of "price gouging" by trying to set higher prices for their exports to oil producing countries than they charged other countries. "These price rises are aimed entirely at petroleum exporting countries and are designed to take advantage of their wealth," he said.

—West Africa, Aug. 20, 1979

Especially when the Yankees are there

■ Concrete in Yankee Stadium is deteriorating, and New York City is preparing to investigate the situation. . . .

"Yankee Stadium is New York's version of 'Apocalypse Now,'" [Gordon J. Davis, commissioner of parks,] said.

—New York Times, Aug. 16, 1979

If at faith you don't succeed . . .

■ A jury awarded more than $2 million in damages Wednesday to a 22-year-old woman who claimed the Church of Scientology defrauded her by failing to fulfill promises of improving her life. . . .

Mrs. [Julie C.] Titchbourne claimed the church courses she took failed to live up to promises to help her with her college classwork, develop her creativity and raise her IQ test scores. She claims she suffers emotional distress as a result.

—Los Angeles Times, Aug. 16, 1979

It sounds like a shotgun wedding

■ Even after a $30 billion outlay to make the new MX blockbuster hard to hit by hauling it back and forth in tunnels or around a race track, it still may need a revived anti-ballistic missile to protect it.

The Air Force acknowledges that possibility in recently released Senate testimony, terming the combination of the MX and ABM "a very happy marriage."

—Washington Post, Aug. 7, 1979

Thinking wasn't in the job description

■ No matter how many times the question was asked, Kit Dobelle could not explain why First Lady Rosalynn Carter needs a $56,000-a-year chief of staff.

"We didn't discuss the details of why it was necessary," said Mrs. Dobelle, protocol chief of the State Department who was hired last week to the newly created position. "It wasn't a question I thought to ask. . . .I was offered the job and I took it."

—Los Angeles Times, Aug. 19, 1979

The City of Brotherly Love

■ In a civil rights suit filed today, the Justice Department accused the Philadelphia Police Department of shooting nonviolent suspects, abusing handcuffed prisoners, suppressing dissension within its ranks and generally engaging in a pattern of brutal behavior that "shocks the conscience."

[Mayor Frank L.] Rizzo called the suit "complete hogwash."

—New York Times, Aug. 14, 1979

■ Three [Philadelphia] policemen accused of beating Delbert Africa, a member of the self-styled revolutionary group Move, acted properly because Mr. Africa "wasn't a man, he was a savage," Police Commissioner Joseph F. O'Neill testified today. . . .

"Delbert Africa wasn't a man," Commissioner O'Neill said. "He was a savage. When you're dealing with a savage you don't know what he may do."

—New York Times, Aug. 17, 1979

He could pick Torquemada as his patron saint

■ President Carter said yesterday that he tried to convert South Korean President Park Chung Hee to Christianity during his visit to Seoul in June and that the matter is now "in God's hands."

—San Francisco Chronicle, Aug. 6, 1979

But Ted drives

■ Governor Jerry Brown is now able to jog as much as 12 miles at a stretch, according to a fellow runner. . . .

—San Francisco Chronicle, Aug. 21, 1979

Late bulletin

■ Federal health officials have concluded that paraquat, the herbicide used to kill marijuana plants, may seriously harm the lungs of smokers and have suggested that spraying of Mexican fields be stopped.

—New York Times, June 22, 1979

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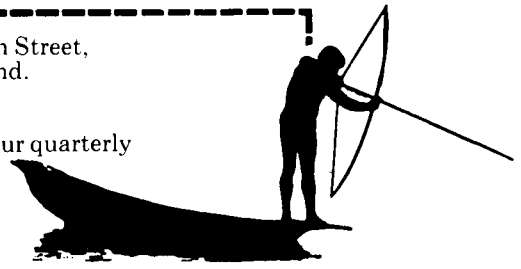

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The real nuclear problem

Nuclear socialism

NOW THAT THE PRESS HAS DISCOVERED that the existing nuclear-power industry is under fire, not only from environmentalists but from a diverse coalition that includes fiscal conservatives, libertarians, and social democrats, it is a good time to make distinctions.

The critics of today's nuclear-power industry—among whom we would most emphatically count ourselves—are divided according to the criticisms they make and the solutions they propose. Critics differ over the roots of the nuclear problem. Ralph Nader sometimes says the problem is nuclear socialism, while Barry Commoner says the solution is sunshine socialism. Some critics fear a disastrous accident. Others are worried about possible pollution hazards from low-level radiation. Still others doubt that an industry subsidized and protected by big government can survive in an era of tax revolt and lowered expectations about government.

On the left, Ralph Nader, who calls the present nuclear setup a corporate welfare system, wonders why the likes of William Simon, William F. Buckley, Milton Friedman, and the American Enterprise Institute are "so calm before the gathering storm of atomic socialism."

"Where is your ideological fervor for free-market enterprise," Nader asks, "when giant mismanaged corporations are pushing Uncle Sam (alias the small taxpayer) to bail them out by socializing their nuclear fission losses?"

The answer to Nader comes in the *Washington Post,* which quotes Representative Jack Kemp, a fiscal conservative, as saying, "the industry should be developed privately." The same story notes that libertarian activists condemn government subsidies for nuclear power and that the National Taxpayers Union thinks that nuclear power is rather costly for the taxpayer.

Of course, nuclear socialism is not made only in the U.S.A. Cuba has just announced plans for a new nuclear-power plant with fewer safeguards than are found in American plants. And the Soviet Union has been building nuclear-power installations for years. Whether a society is ruled by a liberal corporate elite or by a despotic party bureaucracy, the problem is the same: The decisions on nuclear power have been based on political considerations, in utter disregard of the rights of the people affected.

Unfortunately, many of those on the left who condemn nuclear power as having been foisted on a trusting citizenry by a callous corporate state have not learned the moral of the story they tell. It is sad that Michael Harrington–style social democrats like William Winpisinger, president of the machinists' union, are now promoting as an alternative to government-subsidized nuclear power the biggest boondoggle of all: government-subsidized solar-satellite power. It seems that the sentimental attachment of American social democrats to public power is unshakable. It is a hard-nosed sentimentality that once dictated the flooding of the homes of old people in the Tennessee River valley and unnaturally boosted business on the land that remained above water. It is a sentimentality that found the romance of TVA so alluring that in the mid-1950s, when Congress decided to partially move nuclear power into the private sector, such social democrats preferred to leave all nuclear power in the hands of those who had wielded it so effectively against the innocent civilians of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The nuclear-power industry is just one stepchild of big government. Among others are the transcontinental railroad and the interstate highway system. No one would advocate dynamiting them or shutting them down simply because they are subsidized. Similarly no one should consider the history of subsidies for nuclear power sufficient grounds for closing down the plants. Instead this history is ample grounds for immediately ending the subsidy.

Some critics point with alarm to the risks of nuclear power. But life is full of risks and challenges; risks are part of what makes living worthwhile. The effort to create a risk-free society is a retreat to an Eden that will turn out to be not as idyllic as the myth. As Henry Fairlie pointed out in a recent column, the desire to design a risk-free society has always been a sign of decadence. Those who call for the elimination of risk have, as Fairlie suggests, retired from the struggles of history to pet themselves. "With Ralph Nader at the head of the wagon train," Fairlie says, "no one would have made it across the plains, none would have crossed the Rockies, and no immigrant would have pushed noisesomely out of the gutter."

In any case, the risk of a major nuclear accident is slight and the consequences of such an accident, while serious, would be no worse than many other catastrophes that could befall an industrial society.

Other critics charge that low-level radiation may be harmful. This charge is completely unproven and based solely on a straight-line extrapolation from the dangers of high-level radiation, which are well known. If scientific evidence is developed that shows that low-level radiation is a harmful pollutant, then it should be legally enjoined. Until then, the charges about low-level radiation remain so much speculation and in no way constitute sufficient grounds to shut down nuclear plants. If injuries from low-level radiation are someday proven, coal-fired plants will also face injunctions since they emit more low-level radiation than nuclear plants.

Finally, some critics point to the irresponsibility of the industry—artificially absolved from liability for its misdeeds. Leaders of the nuclear and insurance industries have been quick to insist that it would be impossible to provide insurance for nuclear power. But no one should take these statements too seriously, since they are part of a concerted effort to obtain a

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government handout. The amount of private insurance for nuclear power has steadily increased; by now it is the most highly insured industry in America.

The nuclear-power industry should never have been given a special exemption from liability. This exemption should now be ended and the nuclear industry should bear the full cost of insurance and should face unaided the competition of other energy sources.

The industry—and the public—also need to be freed from the distorting role of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The NRC, a political body, has insisted that the industry focus its safety precautions on the most *disastrous* possible accidents—the ones that would be politically most damaging. The NRC has thereby forced the industry to neglect the most *likely* accidents—and can therefore be assigned much of the blame for the Three Mile Island accident. We would all be safer if the NRC were removed from the safety business and the nuclear industry had to meet the exacting standards of the insurance companies.

What would happen to the nuclear industry if the subsidies and liability exemptions were ended? It may turn out that nuclear power was a railroad built along the wrong route. Even though there is evidence that a few utilities were prepared to build power reactors in the 1950s without government aid, the large-scale growth of nuclear power followed enactment of subsidies. The present nuclear industry is thus a product of the technocratic enthusiasm for force-fed industrial growth that was popular in the 1950s. If nuclear-power plants can prosper without much government aid, so much the better. If they cannot, then bye-bye, nuclear.

Chrysler bailout

Making Michigan safe for Jimmy

AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, John Riccardo, chairman of the Chrysler corporation, the nation's tenth largest industrial company, announced that his firm was seeking $1 billion in loans from Washington to help it avoid further severe losses and possible collapse. Chrysler is asking the American public to extricate the company from its current abysmal financial position, which is largely the consequence of its own inept management. Chrysler had deliberately held back on reducing the size of its cars, hoping that GM would absorb the major costs of acclimating the public to smaller automobiles; its decision to delay introduction of a subcompact car to compete with GM's Vega and Ford's Pinto and to concentrate on bigger models came just before the Arab oil embargo in 1973. Chrysler's response was to fire a substantial number of engineers as a cost-cutting measure, thus postponing a much-needed, massive product overhaul like the one undertaken by GM. On top of this, Chrysler decided to rely on Volkswagen to produce its four-cylinder engines rather than manufacturing its own, which has meant that despite brisk demand for its Omni and Horizon subcompacts the firm has been limited to only 300,000 engines for these cars. This string of model errors coupled with a series of failures connected with its foreign operations has brought the firm to the point where its second-quarter losses this year amounted to more than $200 million.

An appeal for public funds to shelter the company from its mistakes is not a new device for Chrysler. Three years ago Chrysler U.K. attempted the same thing and received a British government grant covering most of its operating losses, a grant that extended into 1977, when Chrysler finally sold its ailing European affiliates to Peugeot-Citroën. Now Americans are being asked to bail the firm out of its financial troubles.

What the company seeks is at best an interest-free loan—and at worst an outright grant. Chrysler's contention that its request really strengthens the free market by leaving more companies in the field is pure nonsense. Competition is not predicated on government subsidies for less efficient producers, nor on massive bailout programs for companies whose managements are incapable of adjusting to the demands of the market. Indeed, just the opposite is true. England has for decades suffered the consequences of subsidizing inefficient firms—which the British colorfully call "lame ducks"—and forcibly diverting large amounts of capital from productive uses to keep unproductive companies afloat. The results are invariably the same: inferior products at higher prices, the institutionalization of inefficiency and feckless management, and the prevention of shifts of scarce resources to more productive areas. If the liquidation of bad investments cannot continually take place—as would occur in an unhampered market—there can be no economic growth, no new and better products at lower costs to the consumer. Let no one be fooled: The consumer ultimately pays for managerial inefficiency, just as the consumer ultimately benefits from good management, and it is the profit-and-loss statement of a company that constitutes the measure of managerial ability.

Why, then, is the Carter administration prepared to recommend to Congress federal loan guarantees of $500 million to $750 million, as now seems likely? Bailing out ailing companies is, of course, not new; there is a host of subsidy schemes providing funds to a bewildering array of businesses, from beekeeping to banking. What makes Chrysler's request unique is its sheer size. The amount that Chrysler seeks is four times greater than that doled out to Lockheed in 1971; it is even one-third larger than the sum proposed to bail out the Penn Central railroad (which was eventually turned down by the government). President Carter, however, does not seem overwhelmed by the magnitude of the Chrysler proposal.

Carter won the 1976 Democratic primary in Michigan by only 1,200 votes and ended up losing the state to Gerald Ford by 200,000 votes. Three-quarters of a billion dollars of taxpayers' money is hardly a prohibitive price if it helps to reverse the President's political fortunes, recently at an all-time low. Michigan was at one time considered a fairly solid Democratic stronghold, but since the early sixties and the exodus of newly prosperous blue- and white-collar workers to the Detroit suburbs, large numbers of the otherwise faithful have been abandoning the Democratic party. They, together with the Republican vote beyond Detroit, have been responsible for a series of close elections. The Carter administration clearly cannot afford to turn its back on this opportunity to use the public purse to bribe a still-powerful Michigan corporation and a union as politically oriented as the United Auto Workers. And once again, the public will end up paying.

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LETTERS

Wrong again

YOUR LEAD EDITORIAL "Why the hawks are wrong" [Aug. 6 & 20, 1979] was pathetic—a non-answer to a very serious problem. You spell out in some detail what you are against but when it comes time to say what you're for, what kind of U.S. defense posture you favor, well, you say, this is "too big a question to answer adequately here." What a cop-out!

First, the things about which, I believe, you are flatly mistaken:

■ You say that SALT II "prohibits the Soviets from encrypting the information radioed back to earth from test missiles." This is not true. The treaty allows the Soviets to encrypt all their missile telemetry except the data we are entitled to under the agreement. This means, of course, that it will be the Soviets, not the United States, who will decide what data are relevant.

■ You posit a scenario in which the United States launches its 1054 ICBMs in a first strike, "wiping out all of Russia's modern, multiple-warhead ICBMs and the half of its submarine force not on alert." This could not be done and I challenge you to cite any reputable defense authority who believes that our missiles have this amount of deliverable destructive force.

■ You say that the United States should "uncouple" its strategic weapons from "our overseas commitments." Just like that, huh? Just tear up our NATO treaty, right? And when our allies develop and deploy their own separate nuclear capability—no longer able to rely on our atomic umbrella—you think the world will be a safer place as a result of this proliferation?

You say we should maintain "the minimum arsenal necessary" to destroy the war-making capacity of any nation that would attack us. You say we should have an "assured capability" to knock out the war industries, transport, energy supplies, armies, and weapons of any nation that would attack us. What sort of a strategic force would give us this capability? You say "we could have security with a much smaller force than we have now." But, how much smaller?

Your so-called "alternative policy" is not only no match for the nuclear experts, it wouldn't even bear up under the casual scrutiny of Amy Carter. In fact, your policy reads as if it were drawn up by Amy Carter.

JOHN LOFTON, JR.
Laurel, Md.

(John Lofton is a nationally syndicated columnist for United Features.)

We're sorry that Amy Carter is not available to reply to Mr. Lofton's letter; at press time she was stuck on a Mississippi River steamboat with a father whose idea of a fun vacation is to kiss babies, shake hands, and make the same sappy speech over and over again. So we'll give it a shot ourselves.

First, the things about which we are "flatly mistaken."

■ Encryption. *Mr. Lofton is picking nits. The treaty states that "neither Party shall engage in deliberate denial of telemetric information, such as through the use of telemetry encryption, whenever such denial impedes verification of compliance with the provisions of the Treaty." Since the treaty covers such missile characteristics as launch-weight, throw-weight, and type of propellant, the treaty requires—and the United States will presumably insist—that the Soviets not encrypt telemetry that would allow us to verify these provisions. There will probably be disagreements over what telemetry is relevant to the treaty, but there is no doubt that, as we said in our editorial, the pact will give us more data than we would have without it.*

■ Missile lethality. *If Mr. Lofton doubts the destructiveness of U.S. ICBMs, it is because he hasn't been paying attention to what U.S. defense officials say and write.*

The scenario we offered, a mirror image of one frequently presented by the hawks, is entirely consistent with official figures on ICBM performance. Assuming that the Soviets will have 650 multiple-warhead missiles deployed in 1982, we calculated—according to the formulas used in such mad arithmetic—the impact of a U.S. first strike, using 450 Minuteman III missiles (300 Minuteman IIIs equipped with the Mark 12A reentry vehicle and three W78 warheads, with an accuracy of 600 feet and a yield of 335 kilotons; 150 Minuteman IIIs, each with three warheads of the same accuracy and with a yield of 175 kilotons). These missiles, targeted two warheads per silo, could wipe out 80 percent of Soviet multiple-warhead ICBMs. Eighty percent is not "all" Soviet MIRVs, but it is in the same range of destructiveness as the Soviet first strike that the hawks so fear.

The point of our scenario was not that the United States could or would launch a first strike. On the contrary, we were trying to show that, even though a surprise attack by either nation would give the attacker a major advantage, no first strike could prevent the victim from retaliating with devastating force.

■ Alliance politics. *We don't know where Mr. Lofton has been the last thirty years, but word has apparently not reached him that two of our European allies—Britain and France—have already developed and deployed their own nuclear forces. The French created their* force de frappe *precisely because they doubted the nuclear umbrella; unlike Mr. Lofton, they knew that the NATO treaty does not obligate the United States to trade New York for Paris.*

Any suggestion that the Atlantic alliance is flawed creates instant hysteria among members of the American establishment, but Europeans, whose security is at stake, are increasingly aware that NATO is facing a crisis. As we said in our editorial, Europeans worry that the American threat to use strategic nuclear weapons in the defense of Europe is no longer wholly credible, and they have begun to discuss alternatives to the nuclear umbrella. Last month, for example, two Gaullist leaders influential in military circles proposed the creation of a joint French–West German nuclear force. Suggestions of this kind will become more common as changes in the strategic balance make clear how far American and European security interests have diverged. We believe that it is time for Americans to confront these issues, too.

■ Alternative strategy. *The new strategic policy we proposed would entail phasing out U.S. land-based missiles and relying on a mixed force of submarine-launched missiles and cruise missiles. To carry out the missions outlined in our proposal, the United States would need only one-third as many warheads as it currently deploys. For example, 400 warheads could wipe out 75 percent of the Soviet capacity to produce primary metals, chemicals, petroleum, construction equipment, railroad equipment, synthetic rubber, and electric power generators. According to official estimates, 800 American submarine warheads could destroy 59 percent of all Soviet industry. This is with SLBMs of current accuracy and yield; the Trident I missiles and the air-launched cruise missiles being deployed over the next three years are much more lethal, with the cruise missile having the capacity to destroy virtually any target.* —*EDITORS*

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POLITICS

FRED LANDIS

Georgetown's ivory tower for old spooks

THE GEORGETOWN CENTER for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) may not yet be a household word, but it is rapidly becoming the New Right's most sophisticated propaganda mill. Writers like Michael Ledeen, Edward Luttwak, Walter Laqueur, and Robert Moss—members or close associates of the center—nearly every month grace the pages of such influential political magazines as *National Review, Commentary, New Republic,* and *Harper's,* not to mention the more specialized publications on strategic affairs. And if the "line" that emerges from this common pool of strategic thinkers sounds suspiciously like that of the Pentagon and the CIA, it is no coincidence.

In the wake of recent congressional investigations, the CIA has been forced to back off from its regular practice of recruiting agents from within the working press. But its version of history is today as widely aired as ever, thanks in good measure to the Cold War intellectual elite at the Georgetown center. These articulate and sophisticated anti-Communists, many of them former "national security" officials, are the vanguard of a conservative movement to bury détente and revive the worldwide struggle against the Soviet Union. They are aided immeasurably in that task by the aura of respectability and scholarly detachment they draw from their association with Georgetown University, and by the prestige of the many national publications that now regularly carry their grim writings.

The CSIS is formally a branch of Georgetown University, but its offices, advisory board, and $2.4 million budget (supplied mostly by foundations) are all independent of the administration or faculty of the university. David Abshire, a former assistant secretary of state for congressional affairs, is the center's chief executive officer and the person responsible for convincing Henry Kissinger and Ray Cline, former deputy director of the CIA, to come aboard. Kissinger, in residence along with an entourage of former National Security Council assistants and bodyguards, holds the title of counselor. Walter Laqueur, author of several books on the Middle East, guerrillas, and terrorism, chairs the research council. The senior research staff includes Penelope Hartland-Thunberg, formerly of the CIA's Board of National Estimates; Michael Ledeen, who writes on such subjects as Eurocommunism, terrorism, and CIA "moles"; William Hyland, former director of intelligence at the State Department; and Edward Luttwak, a consultant to the secretary of defense and an adviser to Senator Howard Baker on SALT.

The CSIS holds frequent seminars to keep its staff in touch with influential policy makers—like the time Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith went over to talk with Kissinger and company. It also publishes a journal, edited by Ledeen, *The Washington Quarterly,* and sends free reports out to those likely to be most receptive to its political stance, including Jaswant Singh, editor of publications for the Indian armed forces; *The South African Digest*; the Argentine navy; and the American Petroleum Institute's *The Oil Daily*. Members of Congress also receive its reports regularly. But if you are just a student at Georgetown University, forget it. As the student newspaper once observed, "It is less familiar to most students than the terrain of the Sea of Tranquility. Few have heard about it and among those few, misconceptions abound." Students and the rest of the general public are welcome to see only a CSIS-produced film on the energy crisis "featuring the Flintstone cartoon characters with narration by Charlton Heston," according to the center's annual report.

For its select audience the CSIS strives to produce timely reports on major issues of international politics affecting national security. As Jon Vandracek, director of communications, explained, "What makes the Center unique is its emphasis on anticipating the nature of future problems. . . . *That* is the real story." CSIS publications have anticipated problems with regard to the Soviet threat to Latin America, the terrorist threat to Latin America, the Soviet threat to the Caribbean, and other permutations of the same theme.

*THESE CONCERNS AND PRE-*occupations also permeated a CSIS-sponsored conference on the Communist threat to Italy, held three months before the 1976 Italian elections. Panel members included William E. Colby, Ray Cline, John Connally, Clare Booth Luce, and Claire Sterling. Colby and Cline had spent their careers at the CIA. Connally was then a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, the CIA's oversight panel. Clare Luce had been U.S. ambassador to Italy when Colby was CIA station chief in Rome. Claire Sterling, a free-lance journalist, had long been the correspondent in Italy for the *Reporter* magazine, a key voice of Cold War liberalism until it folded in 1968.

All the panelists agreed on the need for U.S. action to prevent a Communist victory in Italy, frequently citing the Chilean example as a "successful" precedent. They discussed the Italian Communist party (PCI) not so much in its indigenous political context, but rather as a "national security" threat to the United States and all of NATO.

Back in the days when the United States was the undisputed leader of the "Free World," Colby was running the largest political action program in the history of the CIA. Colby tells about this 1950s Italian operation in his recent confessional, *My Life in the CIA*. Before crucial elections the CIA would encourage Italian-Americans to write letters to their relatives in Italy warning them not to vote Communist. One of the CIA's favorite propaganda themes, according to Colby, was the charge that the PCI received secret Russian funding through a complex of party-controlled import-export firms that engaged in trade with Soviet-bloc countries.

Georgetown's center is in the vanguard of the movement to bury détente and revive containment.

The CSIS conference on Italy ended

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with the proposal that the 22 million Italian-Americans and 50 million American Catholics wage a letter writing campaign to influence the Italian election. In the following days full-page ads appeared in major U.S. newspapers calling on Americans to write "to friends or relatives you have in Italy to vote to maintain their freedom on June 20–21." Those ads were sponsored by the Citizens' Alliance for Mediterranean Freedom, a political action committee organized by several participants in the CSIS conference, most notably John Connally. The new group was ready and willing to take on the Communists in a propaganda war. Bill Gill, executive director of CAMF, warned journalists that news out of Italy was tainted: "Don't talk to anyone in the Italian wire services," he said. "All the Italian press has been infiltrated by the Communists." He suggested instead Claire Sterling and his "friend" Ray Cline as reliable interpreters of the Italian political scene.

The day after the CSIS conference, the *New Republic* published a lead article, "Italy's Russian Sugar Daddies," by Claire Sterling and Michael Ledeen. Their argument? That the PCI received secret Soviet funding through a complex of party-controlled import-export firms.

The *New Republic* was until recently published by Robert J. Myers, formerly a CIA officer in Indonesia and Cambodia. Myers served as an assistant to Colby and is a close friend of Ray Cline. When Cline made public appearances to promote his latest book, Myers accompanied him and introduced him to the audiences. Myers testified with Cline in January 1978 at congressional hearings on the CIA and the media, where he stated, "The reciprocal relationship between the CIA and the American press has been of value to both parties and often to the individuals themselves whose careers may have mutually benefited by such connections."

Just before the elections, "Italy's Russian Sugar Daddies" was reprinted in the *Rome Daily American* and in the magazine *Il Borghese*. Reporters newly arrived in Rome received unsolicited copies of the Sterling/Ledeen exposé, courtesy of the U.S. embassy.

The *Rome Daily American* is perhaps best known for its generous benefactor, the CIA. CIA support to the paper was originally requested by Ambassador Luce in the 1950s; Colby, then in charge of the Rome station, reluctantly went along. By the time Graham Martin became ambassador, in 1969, control over the newspaper had slipped somewhat, so Martin ordered a new infusion of covert funds. Martin also gave $800,000 in CIA funds to sponsor propaganda by the neofascist Movimento Sociala Italiano (MSI). *Il Borghese* is the official propaganda organ of the MSI.

Meanwhile, over at the American embassy, Bruno Scarfi at the U.S. Information Agency would hand reporters copies of "Italy's Russian Sugar Daddies," hoping to divert attention from the widely publicized "Pike report" of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, which exposed CIA intervention in Italian politics. "The Pike report," lamented Scarfi, "has destroyed the possibility of further cooperation by Italians with the CIA." Even so, he explained, the United States had other means of influencing events—such as the rapid production of news documentaries in Italy, flown by jet to Monte Carlo and beamed back at Italian TV viewers. Paid political ads were not permitted on Italian TV, but Monte Carlo's channel was completely commercial and could reach Italy. The United States could purchase a bloc of time on Monte Carlo TV and determine the programming.

But Monte Carlo TV was not the only broadcast outlet for American propaganda, as millions of Italians learned while sitting glued to their sets on June 21, 1976, waiting for the election returns. The polls were still open when two obscure Americans appeared on Channel 1 to warn of the danger of a Communist victory. Michael Ledeen and Claire Sterling were members of a panel of commentators that remained on the air from 4 P.M. until 2 A.M. the next morning. Channel 1 is controlled by the Christian Democratic party, which from 1948 to 1976 received the bulk of the $75 million in covert funds the CIA sent to Italy, not including the $6 million spent specifically for the 1976 elections.

WHILE THE HOUSE SELECT Committee on Intelligence (the Pike committee) told us a little about CIA propaganda activities in Italy, the Senate's intelligence committee, under Frank Church, blew the lid off CIA media activities in Chile. In two detailed reports the committee quoted CIA cables on propaganda guidance to the Santiago station, including details of "disinformation" directed at the Chilean armed forces to shake their loyalty to the Allende government. The committee reports specified the contents, direction, and cost of this propaganda war. The largest single recipient of CIA propaganda funds was the newspaper *El Mercurio*. In anticipation of the March 4, 1973, elections, the CIA gave an additional $965,000 to *El Mercurio* and $1,427,666 to opposition political parties.

In addition to the rumors and forged documents, the CIA's media campaign was reinforced by the planting in Chilean military journals and in *El Mercurio* of "studies" by James Theberge, director of Latin American studies at CSIS. On February 27, 1973, *El Mercurio* headlined, "Chile Gives Haven to Extremist Network." The article from the UPI wire began, "The Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University today pointed out . . . " followed by several standard propaganda themes favored by the CIA, quoted from a forthcoming book by Theberge. In particular, the article claimed to have uncovered a clandestine Korean Communist guerrilla training camp that had been moved from Havana to Santiago with the approval of President Allende. The article ended by asserting that the Chilean leftists trained at this phantom base "have intimidated the democratic opposition during the electoral campaign of March 1973."

Here was a preposterous situation: A Chilean newspaper was making sensational allegations concerning events supposedly taking place in Chile and attributing the story to an institute in Washington, D.C. But it served the CIA well to have such non-news circulated by a friendly "expert" and laundered through a reputable news organization like UPI. And the timing was ideal.

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Although the CSIS only got around to publishing Theberge's entire work (*Russia in the Caribbean*) toward the end of 1973, the paragraph on the March elections had been planted in Chile's leading newspaper before the elections even took place.

The Theberge incident was far from unique. That same year, for instance, the CSIS published another book of similar title and content: *The Stability of the Caribbean,* edited by the British journalist Robert Moss. Moss's book was published jointly with the London-based Institute for the Study of Conflict, with financial support from the Tinker Foundation. Contributors to the book included James Theberge; Brian Crozier, head of the institute; and Moss himself, who was identified as the author of "the forthcoming book, *Chile's Marxist Experiment.*"

Brian Crozier had previously been the "director-general" of Forum World Features, a feature news syndicate that reached at least thirty newspapers in America and hundreds abroad. FWF folded in April 1975, just prior to the disclosure in the British and American press of classified CIA documents proving that it had been a CIA operation all along. In a 1968 report to CIA director Richard Helms, the London station chief, Cord Meyer, noted that "FWF was created from the residue of Forum Service, an activity of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), from which the CIA withdrew its support in 1966." Forum Service was in turn the outgrowth of Information Bulletin, Ltd., a CCF project whose "principal director" was Walter Laqueur, now with the CSIS in Washington. After 1966, the CIA controlled FWF through a Delaware corporation, Kern House Enterprises. Kern House also provided the initial funds for the Institute for the Study of Conflict, which Crozier founded in 1974 as an offshoot of FWF; Robert Moss was also a member.

In January 1977, the *Guardian* (London) and the *New York Times* identified *Chile's Marxist Experiment* as one of the propaganda books produced by the CIA. These articles also revealed that the entire second printing of Moss's book had been purchased by the Chilean military junta at a cost of £55,000, to be given away as part of a propaganda package.

THE DETAILS OF HOW *Chile's Marxist Experiment* came to be published show that the CIA does not merely subsidize right-wing hacks to do their own work; rather, it directs the production of propaganda at every stage. Correspondence between David & Charles, Ltd., the publisher, and Forum World Features and the Institute for the Study of Conflict shows that the CIA first selected the title and then went searching for an author. It rejected the first candidate (Michael Field of the *Daily Telegraph*), then settled on Moss, paid him in advance to write the book, and supervised the content and progress of his manuscript over several years.

Such CIA-sponsored propaganda was directed as much at English-speaking as Spanish-speaking audiences; like the Chilean junta's CIA-prepared "White Paper" on the coup, it was meant to convince Americans of the dangers of Marxism in Latin America. CSIS members saw to it that Congress heard the message. Thus in 1974, when James Theberge was about to become ambassador to Nicaragua, he read his article "Kremlin's Hand in Allende's Chile" into the record of the House Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs hearings on "The U.S. and Chile During the Allende Years, 1970–1973." Theberge had prepared the article for a conference on Chile held at the CSIS a short time earlier. Theberge decided to bring his fellow conference participant Robert Moss to the hearings so that Congress could benefit from the knowledge of both these scholars.

The first line of Theberge's article, inserted in the hearing record, quotes "Eudocio Ravines, the brilliant Peruvian Communist." Now it just so happens that Ravines is known to have been on the CIA payroll since 1950. In his autobiography, *Undercover,* E. Howard Hunt recounts how, as the CIA's station chief in Mexico City, he worked with Ravines and future *National Review* publisher William F. Buckley on propaganda campaigns. One of the tricks they pulled was to print up copies of a fake Peking newspaper during the visit of a local Mexican Communist to China. The phony newspaper headlined an insult against Mexico allegedly made by the Mexican. Copies of the CIA-concocted newspaper were then passed around the country to discredit him.

The same technique was used against Allende on January 7, 1973, while he was visiting the Soviet Union. *El Mercurio* ran a whole page under the masthead and cyrillic letters of *Pravda.* The fake headline had Allende calling the USSR "Our Big Brother." *El Mercurio*'s own Soviet correspondent, who had nothing to do with this trick, cabled a correction that the head office ignored.

Appropriately enough, Theberge's article treats *El Mercurio*'s account as gospel truth, citing President Allende's description of the USSR as Chile's "Big Brother."

"That first amendment is only an amendment, you know," Ray Cline told Congress.

With colleagues like Theberge around, it is no wonder that Ray Cline finds the Georgetown center such a congenial place to work. Currently director of world power studies at CSIS, Cline has called for a strengthening of ties among journalists, academics, and his old boss, the CIA. In testimony before the House Select Committee on Intelligence, Cline went even further than the CIA's present and former directors, Stansfield Turner and William Colby, in defending CIA manipulation of the press—everything from planting black propaganda to passing covert funds to journalists. "You know," he observed, "that first amendment is only an amendment." And in a study of CIA reorganization sponsored by the CSIS Cline wrote, "I think links between our best intelligence analysts and the academic research people with expertise on subjects under study in Washington should be built up far more than has been possible because of fears that exchanging information and views with CIA is somehow a corrupting process."

Most CSIS members, as Cline appreciates, rarely harbor any such fears. Despite their guise of academic objectivity, these Cold War intellectuals have cast aside their independence and volunteered to serve the state. Other academics and intellectuals, during the Vietnam War, finally realized that too cozy a relationship with official power could threaten their integrity. But these new Georgetown mandarins, untroubled by such doubts, welcome the chance to join and to aggrandize the national-security establishment. ❑

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THE SMALL SCANDAL ADMINISTRATION

The only way to fix the Small Business Administration is to tear it down.

By Leonard Reed

OF LATE, CONGRESS HAS discovered that the Small Business Administration is a big headache. Senator William Proxmire recently lashed out at the SBA as a "repository of patronage and scandal." Representative Joseph McDade of Pennsylvania, the ranking Republican on the House Small Business Committee, said the committee needed a larger staff "to get a handle on some of the dollars misappropriated by the agency." Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, chairman of the Senate Select Small Business Committee, accused the SBA of "widespread and extensive mismanagement" and angrily threatened to abolish the whole agency. And A. Vernon Weaver, SBA's administrator, confessed that "reprehensible things have been done with this program."

Nobody in Washington takes seriously the histrionics of committee chairmen threatening to do away with the federal agencies that give them their power and prestige, and the heads of those agencies are beguilingly forthcoming in admitting the blunders of their predecessors. There is also, to be sure, a certain comic charm in the consistency with which SBA has been falling into the paint pot since its inception in 1953. A few examples:

Early in SBA's history, Congress hit upon the device of the "Small Business Investment Corporation" as a funnel for making money available to businesses otherwise unable to raise venture capital. SBICs are unhampered by the restrictions under which banks operate. They can, for example, buy stock in the companies they lend to, or take stock options on high-risk ventures. An investment corporation puts up some front money, on the basis of which SBA lends it additional capital; the corporation then invests in various small enterprises. And so, early on, a group of entrepreneurs borrowed heavily from banks in Dallas and Chicago, deposited the money in a bank in the East, and on the strength of that "resource," borrowed a still larger amount from the SBA to set up their small business investment corporation. They then repaid their bank loans and operated entirely on SBA funds—which they used not to help capitalize small businesses but to line their pockets. Belatedly, the rules were tightened. Of the 900 SBICs that once flourished, fewer than 300 survive.

The years go by and the scene shifts to Washington, where the Carter administration, in February 1978, announces a broad program to increase ownership of broadcast stations and cable television systems by members of racial and ethnic minorities. The SBA would provide up to $350,000 per applicant in direct loans (and would underwrite more in bank loans) to individuals wanting to buy broadcast or cable facilities. "The loans," reported the *Wall Street Journal*, "will be available to all applicants but the SBA anticipates that minority-group members will find it easiest to meet the agency's criteria."

But by mid-November 1978, of the thirty-two transactions the SBA made under the new program, only seven involved members of minority groups. One of the largest loans, amounting to $345,000, went to "Tom-Tom Communications," which only *sounds* like a Cherokee operation: The two Toms were Tom Brokaw, host of NBC's "Today Show," and his partner and former college-mate at the University of South Dakota, Tom Kearns. Brokaw's NBC salary is an estimated $500,000 a year.

The common element in such foul-ups is the SBA's proclivity for dashing into—or being thrown into—problem situations before the solutions have been thought through; the rules are always trying to catch up with the embarrassments. The fault lies largely with Congress, which started the SBA off with a vaguely worded mission and then left it to the bureaucracy to find its own niche in the world.

THE SMALL BUSINESS Administration was established "to promote free enterprise" by helping the smallest and weakest competitors. By SBA's own statistics, small businesses comprise 97 percent of all U.S. enterprises and account for 55 percent of all private employment, as well as 43 percent of the GNP—which gave the new agency a wide ranch to roam on. Initially, it was expected to lend money to worthy but needy small businesses, to direct some government contracts their way, and to offer them management counseling. SBA was also to provide emergency funds for businessmen and homeowners hit by natural disasters (and, perhaps not surprisingly, in this one clearly defined activity SBA has been least ineffective).

As time passed, Congress saddled the SBA with additional chores; today it operates some twenty different programs involving about $4 billion per year. That's a lot of money, and a major problem has been deciding whom it's for.

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The definition of "small business" has been so blurry that at one point American Motors, the 109th largest industrial corporation in America, was declared eligible for assistance; by comparison with its competitors, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler, it *is* small.

Inevitably, the lack of clarity about SBA's program benefits has resulted in a lot of finagling, and as a result, the agency has been inviting such adjectives as "fraud-ridden" and "scandal-rocked." Its list of embarrassments is long and colorful. In 1973, a congressional investigation turned up instances of kickbacks, bribery, loans to defunct companies, and a variety of other felonies.

The director of SBA's Office of Business Development resigned after investigators determined that he was accepting favors from one of the agency's contractors and was negotiating federal contracts for a company in which he held an interest. SBA's director for the Richmond, Virginia, district was indicted on fifteen counts of bribery and mail fraud. "The massive scheme to defraud and corrupt the agency," as the federal prosecutors characterized it, included, among other things, taking $373,000 for approving loan- and lease-guarantee applications—some from phony corporations—amounting to almost $7 million. Found guilty, he was sentenced to nine years in jail. Three years later, the acting regional director in New York—a piker by comparison—was convicted for accepting $6,000 in bribes to approve almost $1 million in loans. In 1977, a high official of the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company of New York was convicted, in connection with kickbacks on SBA-guaranteed loans, of conspiring to defraud the United States.

The bulk of the scandals in the past have concerned SBA's "7a" program, under which the agency makes direct loans to applicants, or guarantees up to 90 percent repayment on loans that cooperating banks make to small businesses. The direct loans are made at low interest rates and are a form of subsidy. By commercial standards, the loss rates on these loans is high, averaging between 6 and 7 percent. SBA's loss rates are predictable, however, since SBA is a "lender of last resort"; its loans go to applicants who are unable to borrow from conventional banking sources. To qualify for an SBA loan an applicant must have been turned down by two banks (or, in small towns, by one bank). The larger part of the more than $3 billion in loans to the 31,000 businesses SBA deals with is in the form of guaranteed rather than direct loans.

Lately, the spotlight has shifted to the grotesqueries taking place under SBA's "8a" program. Ten years ago, in the era of riots and burning cities, the federal government began looking for ways to channel government contracts to the inner cities. Out of that search came Nixon's "black capitalism" initiative, with the Small Business Administration the honcho awarding a proportion of federal contracts from all government agencies to minority business ventures; the SBA also made loans in support of minority contractors. By 1978, "8a" had grown to where an annual $750 million worth of contracts for federal services, ranging from janitorial to architectural, was being withheld from competitive bidding and reserved for minority businesses. And like other federal programs launched with that much fanfare, money and contracts were literally thrown at "minority businesses."

"It became a numbers game," Weaver admitted recently, "and program resources were devoted to the placement of the maximum number of contracts for maximum dollar amounts, with inadequate controls or attention to the financial viability of the company."

Weaver's admission followed the revelation of a series of abuses. The ones that got the most headlines concerned instances of white wheeler-dealers glomming on to the noncompetitive contracts by setting up "black fronts" for their businesses. In a typical example, uncovered by Senate investigators in 1978, a group of North Carolina operators set up seven separate "black" companies and garnered $16 million in government contracts over a three-year period. The white sponsors siphoned off more than $4 million of that for "management services." The secretary-treasurer of one of the companies they set up, to use the most egregious example, was a 73-year-old illiterate black farm laborer who signed his name with an X and whose real job, the investigators established, was to clean up the office. Exactly how many of the 1600 contractors in the "8a" program are legitimate and how many are fronts is a matter of speculation that may be resolved when the SBA concludes an investigation it's been prodded into.

Congress put party hacks in the FDA in the first place.

BEYOND THE "BLACK front" charges, the "8a" program has been the target of critics from both the left and the right, as well as friends dismayed by SBA's lax management of the program. Senator Nelson, in the 1978 hearings, took issue with SBA for allowing a Texas meat-processing firm to participate in the program despite the company president's annual income of $200,000 and net worth of more than $1 million. In the same hearings, Weaver conceded that of 3400 minority firms aided by SBA over the past ten years, only thirty or so were known to be still in operation.

Undoubtedly, some of the criticism of the millions of dollars lent to minority firms, which may be uncollectable because the firms go out of business before they can deliver, is "white backlash"—the irritation of white firms that resent the awarding of the noncompetitive contracts. Equally severe criticism, however, comes from the minority contractors themselves, who feel that the program is poorly conceived. They charge that the SBA undercapitalizes minority firms, makes loan and contract applications a nightmare of red tape, requires time-consuming administrative details, and fails to give fragile businesses the kind of support needed to survive.

"The best way I can put it," said Milton Carey, president of a lobby called the Associated Minority Contractors of America, "is to compare a minority businessperson to a football superstar, a runner. What makes this guy run? Well, there are ten other people out there blocking and coordinating with him. . . . In addition, if you look out on the sideline, you see his defensive team that has something to do with his running the ball. Then there are the coaches, the guy who cuts the grass. . . . If such an involved system and infrastructure is required to make a football player operate meaningfully on the field, what kind of system must it take to make a minority business operate?"

What makes the SBA so vulnerable to charges of corruption, incompetence, and impotence? Are the factors built into the agency? Some of them are.

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To begin with, there is that root of all evil. Unlike government agencies that deliver the mail, maintain forests, or develop new strains of seed for farmers, the commodity SBA handles is money, lots of it. The prospect of wallowing in some of that money attracts to SBA's cash windows, in addition to legitimate applicants, an overly large number of con men and grifters; operating on their own or, in some cases, with the bought collaboration of SBA employees, they perpetrate all sorts of scams.

Cosmetic improvements won't keep the FDA alive.

Within the SBA itself, even if one concedes adequate standards of morality, money exerts a subtle influence on behavior. The bureaucratic dynamic is such that the importance of an office and its staff, as well as the opportunities for advancement, are directly related to the amount of funds or services dispensed—which weighs invisibly on the scales when an SBA office considers the merits of a loan application.

Part of SBA's problems stems from its being a "low-visibility" agency: Although it has managed to be an embarrassment in virtually every administration, even the headlines it makes are small ones, and most Americans are only peripherally aware of its existence. Low-visibility agencies are natural vehicles for campaign managers and congressmen to repay small political debts and over the years a collection of political hacks and drum-beaters have been foisted on the agency. Most of them eventually acquire civil-service status and burrow in. The result is one of those anomalies frequently seen in government: an overstaffed agency with too few competent people to function. The solution that SBA, like any bureaucracy, proposes is—more people. Congress, which is traditionally lavish in giving agencies funds to disburse but warier about appropriating funds for agency staff increases, demurs. Its oversight committees point out that the 4400 people on the SBA's payroll is an ample complement. What SBA needs, they say, is not more but better people, which is sheer chutzpah since congressmen are largely responsible for putting the incompetents there in the first place. And despite the ballyhooed civil-service reform, it remains virtually impossible to fire any tenured civil servant—a circumstance for which Congress is eminently responsible.

The pervasiveness of politics at all levels of the SBA makes a mockery of each administration's vow to clean up the agency. In July 1978 the Senate confirmed the nomination of Milton D. Stewart to the post of Chief Counsel for Advocacy, despite the fierce opposition of Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut. Weicker pointed not only to proceedings that the Securities and Exchange Commission had instituted against Stewart four years earlier, but to the fact that Stewart, one of the earliest activists for Carter's nomination, had been cited by the SBA itself for violating three separate federal regulations. Nine of the agency's ten regional directors are political appointees: The turnover rate is high and the awareness of who's on first is correspondingly low. Weaver, the current administrator, is a former Annapolis classmate of Jimmy Carter.

If, as Senator Proxmire and others have charged, loan decisions are made on the basis of political favoritism, the decentralized nature of SBA's management provides a shield behind which headquarters can disclaim responsibility. Loans are made at the local level, and because of poor data management, headquarters, according to sources on the Senate Select Small Business Committee, rarely knows so elementary a thing as the status of the agency's outstanding loans. In the 1978 hearings it was discovered that of the $137 million in "8a" loans advanced over the past ten years, the whereabouts of $26 million—almost half of the unpaid balance—could not be determined. Weaver also had to admit that even the names of those financed by the program got lost. The Senate investigators, in exasperation, denounced the "stone-age mentality in record-keeping" at the agency.

In 1978, the SBA's Security and Investigation Division conducted 59 internal investigations of SBA personnel and 35 investigations of "applicant representatives"—independent operators who assist loan applicants in filling out the forms, sometimes at exorbitant fees and with (sometimes) false claims of influence in Washington. The division also referred 415 cases of suspected criminality to the Department of Justice. Most concerned such items as false claims on loan applications, but 26 involved SBA personnel. There is considerable question—throughout government—as to whether inspectors general who are responsible to the heads of their agencies have the independence necessary to expose corruption when the result would inevitably be bad publicity. Therefore Congress in 1978 authorized the appointment of twelve new inspectors general to scrutinize the agencies most prone to corruption. They would report to Congress. One of them, Paul R. Brecher, was appointed this year to the SBA.

Very late in the game, Congress has also taken some tentative steps to clarify what the SBA should and shouldn't be doing. Public Law 95-507 attempts to define more clearly what "small business" is and who is eligible to participate in the SBA programs. It bolsters the faltering "8a" program with provisions designed to eliminate the "black front" abuses, and includes other provisions aimed at increasing the likelihood that firms receiving contracts under the program will survive long enough to deliver.

*YET NEITHER A NEW IN*spector general nor Public Law 95-507 is likely to cure the SBA. Clearly, more important than whom an inspector general reports to are the people he works with, eats with, rubs shoulders with, and, ultimately, identifies with—in short, the officials of his agency. And although they may welcome the new legislation as a step toward tidying up the rules and procedures, Washington-watchers remain skeptical of the ability—and the will—of Congress to go beyond the cosmetic approach. There is always the lurking sense that the SBA's organic ills may well be incurable. So long as the SBA dangles tempting, cheap loans in front of five million small businesses, only 1 percent of whom can come up lucky, and so long as the SBA is a haven for small-time politicians, payoffs, pulling strings, and political favoritism will remain the name of the game.

So, whither the SBA?

One is reminded of the contractor who surveyed the badly skewed "dream house" Mr. Blandings wanted to renovate, and rendered his considered judgment:

"Tear it down!" ❑

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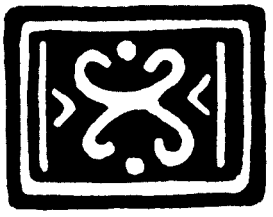
CORRUPTING COLOMBIA



While the United States winks at marijuana use at home, its drug policies are undermining Colombia's fragile democracy.

By Penny Lernoux

"To hell with this fucking pizza!"

My husband and I sat frozen in our chairs as the squat, dark man at the next table hurled the offending pizza onto the sidewalk, plate and all.

"You're absolutely right, it's a fucking pizza," gabbled the restaurant owner, hastily producing a smaller one.

No one on Colombia's Caribbean coast argues with an armed Guajiro Indian, particularly over so small a matter as the size of a pizza. Just the week before, a young man from a socially prominent family had been shot dead a block away in an open-air chicken restaurant. He had sided with the waiter when a group of Guajiros refused to pay the bill.

Located in the center of the tourist district in the beach resort of Cartagena, the pizza parlor normally is jammed with families and teen-agers, but that evening there were only ourselves and three Guajiros, guns bulging from hip pockets, a bottle of Johnny Walker prominently displayed on the table. Still cursing in Spanish and Guajiro, they eventually departed, bottle in hand, roaring down the street in a flashy new American car.

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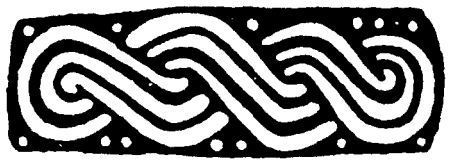

SUCH INCIDENTS ARE STILL RELATIVELY rare in Cartagena, which is located at the western end of the Colombian drug coast that begins on the Venezuelan frontier in the wild northeastern Guajira Peninsula. But shootings and murders are common occurrences in Riohacha and Santa Marta, and in Barranquilla, the largest city on the coast and financial headquarters for the marijuana trade that is conservatively estimated at $1.4 billion a year. Despite militarization of the region and a draconian security statute decreed in the fall of 1978, the violence has not abated.

Frequently compared to the Wild West rampages, the drug-fueled violence provides an abundant source of anecdotes for colorful press copy. Yet there is nothing in the least picturesque about a national tragedy that is rapidly eroding the social and economic foundations of Colombia's fragile democracy. The marijuana traffic is also destroying the ancient Indian cultures of the Guajira Peninsula, including the once proud Guajiros, who for centuries resisted Spanish acculturation, only to fall victim to the gringos' drug dollars. These problems are greatly accentuated by U.S. interference in Colombia, where American officials have encouraged a military takeover in order to stop the trade.

No one knows the exact size of Colombia's northbound drug traffic, but private and government surveys indicate the country receives at least $3 billion a year from marijuana and cocaine. This is but a fraction of the drugs' $31 billion street value in the United States. It is generally accepted that Colombia gets, in wholesale terms, one-fifth of the take, U.S. dealers the rest. Nonetheless, Colombia's income from drugs

Guajiros, who fought Spanish acculturation, have fallen victim to the gringos' drug dollars.

exceeds the combined total of all other Colombian exports including coffee.

"Marimba," as pot is called in Colombia, has been grown since the early sixties on the verdant flanks of the Sierra Nevada, at the edge of the arid Guajira Peninsula. Once the center of the Tairona Indians' pre-Columbian civilization, the area used to be a popular rendezvous for pot-smoking American hippies, who camped on the beaches at the foot of the mountains and passed the time in amateur archeological digs. Few ventured into the Guajira northeast of the mountains, since there were almost no roads and little of interest to the tourist. Riohacha, the region's capital, was and is a small, dirty port of some 80,000 people. In the days before the Guajira's 150-mile coast became the principal shipping point for the Sierra Nevada's "green gold," most of Riohacha earned its living from fishing. Nomad Guajiro Indians ranged the cactus lands north and east of the town in an area about the size of New Jersey, subsisting by raising goats and cattle or working the sea-salt flats at Manaure and Bahia Honda.

Proud, independent people with a rigid social code, the Guajiros resisted assimilation through their nomadic life style and isolation in a harsh, dry terrain unsuitable for traditional farming. Divided into eighty tribes, the Indians live in small, isolated settlements called "rancherías," each with one or two families, scattered over several hundred acres, a factor that helped reduce the contagion of diseases that decimated other Colombian tribes. While many of the men have abandoned the traditional loincloth and multicolored sash, the Guajiro women still wear distinctive flowing mantles. Few speak Spanish or want to.

Totally ignored by the central government in Bogotá, the Guajiros lived on the edge of starvation, and in the years when there was no rain many of their flocks died. The principal industry in the region was and is the salt flats, where the Indians toil for slave wages, the men chopping out the salt with picks while the women carry the back-breaking sacks. Although large coal and gas deposits have been discovered in recent years, this has not yet produced much in the way of jobs or income.

The more enterprising made a living from smuggling contraband, a tradition dating to colonial times when Colombia's Caribbean coast was known as the Spanish Main. Local authorities winked at the whiskey-and-cigarette traffic because the Indians had no other means of sustenance. The police and military also profited from the trade through a graded system of bribes at various checkpoints along the coast.

Tons of contraband still move along the coastal road, east to Maicao on the Venezuelan frontier, and southwest to Barranquilla, Cartagena, and the interior cities, and even as far as Ecuador. The Indian settlements are just as poor and isolated, the cattle and goats still scrawny and thirsty. But since the marijuana boom began in 1974 everything else has changed. Now the "law of the Guajira" means indiscriminate killing, not only in the peninsula but the entire length of the Caribbean coast; "Guajiro" has become synonymous with "bandit." The Indians are degenerating into a people without a social code, their traditions of solidarity and generosity replaced by hatred and suspicion. Today, it is worth a stranger's life to venture into the northern Guajira; an Italian priest, for example, was shot dead on the beaches, an innocent tourist mistaken for an FBI agent.

The situation is much the same in the Sierra Nevada, where thousands of impoverished peasants from the interior, "cachacos," have converged. Many were displaced by "la violencia," the 1948–58 civil war between Colombia's two traditional political parties in which an estimated 250,000 people died. The children of violence, these Colombians have learned to use guns in order to survive. There are frequent clashes with the Guajiros, from whom the "cachacos" have wrested control of the marijuana plantations, but despite the daily killings there is a generally accepted division of labor, the Indians in charge of transporting the processed marijuana bales by mule down the mountains to the Guajira's isolated ports and clandestine runways, the "cachacos" monopolizing the planting and harvesting and the intermediary role of buyer for the marijuana chieftains in Barranquilla and Santa Marta.

Of the three surviving non-Guajiro tribes in the Sierra Nevada, the Koguis are rapidly becoming extinct, their land

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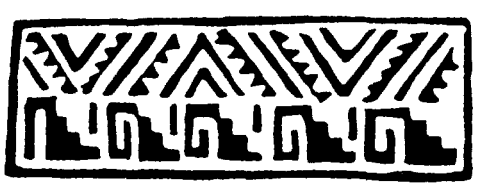
seized by marijuana-hungry peasants from the interior, their people murdered or victims of the invaders' diseases. Descended from the Taironas, who built terraced cities and forged the most beautiful gold ornaments in pre-Columbian America, the Koguis have no legal protection or reservation. Pushed higher and higher into the mountains by the marijuana planters, they will not survive another decade, say local anthropologists.

Traditional agriculture in the areas south and west of the mountains has declined because the cotton and rice planters cannot match the wages paid by the marijuana growers; some planters have become marijuana growers themselves. An agricultural worker can earn about $5000 from two harvests in the marijuana fields, a fortune in a country where 70 percent of the labor force averages only $720 a year. Some 6000 peasants have set themselves up as small independent growers, making two and a half times the income from marijuana that they would from coffee, at one-tenth the cost. Thus a whole new class of peasant farmers has grown up around the marijuana traffic.

Guajiro economist Victor Pacheco Laborde argues that "the blessed grass" has been the economic salvation of the region. Before the marijuana boom, he said, "the Guajiro suffered physical hunger. In order to obtain an $800 loan from the government agrarian bank, he had to make twenty trips to the city and stand in long lines only to be told that he needed another document, that some paper lacked a comma, that there was no money. In those days we were orphans, and nobody felt the least compassion for us. But all that has changed since the gringos came with their money."

Riohacha's Bishop Livio Reginaldo Fischione agrees: "The long lines at the agrarian bank have moved to the Bank of the Republic, only now the people are not asking for loans but changing dollars. Today nobody wants to work outside the marijuana industry. The students in our schools are not interested in studying math or any other subject that does not help to produce money, or marijuana. Government representatives occasionally visit us from Bogotá, supposedly to solve our problems, but they spend most of the time drinking whiskey so nothing gets done."

The Colombian military tends to be relatively lenient with the small growers rounded up in marijuana raids because, as the peasants point out, "We have no other source of income." But for every marijuana field destroyed by the army, two more are planted farther up the mountains or on ground burned by the military the previous year. The military estimates that it would take an army of 50,000 soldiers to destroy the widely scattered, nearly inaccessible marijuana plantations, and the armed forces already are overstretched. (The government spent over $10 million on the drug campaign in 1978 alone.) The latest aerial inspection of the Sierra Nevada showed over 100,000 acres planted in the second crop this year, each acre yielding a ton of marijuana. The Colombian attorney general's office estimates that another 50,000 acres are planted elsewhere in the country, primarily in the eastern plains and the Darien rain forests bordering Panama. Thus the costly militarization of the Guajira stops no more than 10 percent of the traffic.



NOWHERE ARE THESE CONTRADICTIONS more apparent than in Santa Marta and Barranquilla, which are controlled by the new-rich marijuana families who only a decade ago made a modest living from selling contraband cigarettes. When a rival gang's hitman murdered Luis Pérez, better known as "Lucho Barranquilla," 4000 people turned out to mourn the former cigarette vendor. One of the city's drug kingpins, Lucho was particularly remembered for having bought the building housing the narcotics police and then evicting them.

Lucho's widow Carmen later married the head of another prominent marijuana family in a $228,000 wedding attended by the local bishop. The guests were entertained by the country's best orchestras during three days of festivities in the plush Puerto Galeón Hotel and the drug mansions of Santa Marta.

The "law of the Guajira" means indiscriminate killing; Guajiro is now a synonym for bandit.

In the once exclusive environs of Barranquilla's golf club, marijuana families are gradually moving into the mansions previously owned by the city's aristocratic families, who have fled down the coast to Cartagena. Surrounded by high cement walls, with a forest of rooftop radio equipment to monitor the marijuana traffic, the mansions are patrolled by armed guards whose off-duty pastimes include shooting up the local bars and using lampposts for target practice. But the heads of the established marijuana families already show signs of social assimilation by Colombia's "old money": buying expensive club memberships and Miami apartments, sending their children abroad to study, and contributing to the election of friendly congressmen and municipal councilmen. "In another generation," predicts Colombian journalist Enrique Santos Calderón, "you won't be able to tell them apart." Indeed, the more polished "marimberos" look like typical business executives, soft-spoken Colombians with elegantly dressed wives, who boast alternately of their Guajiro Indian origins and the new tennis courts they are building.

Drug money also has become an increasingly important factor in local and national politics. Diplomatic sources claim that 15 to 20 percent of the Colombian Congress was elected with drug funds, and there have been a number of charges and countercharges by senators from the coast asserting their opponents gained office with marijuana money. (Vote-buying has been a common practice on the coast for many years; the difference today is that the well-heeled drug smuggler can often outbuy his political opponents.)

Inevitably, there has been an increase in government corruption, particularly among judicial and customs authorities. A survey by the prestigious National Association of Financial Institutes (ANIF), representing insurance companies and banks, revealed that some $115 million in bribes is annually distributed to official intermediaries by the marijuana traffickers. Colombian lawyers also have developed a lucrative new source of income in defending smugglers, earning $5,000 to

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$50,000 a case.

Senator Roberto Gerlein has denounced the municipal government of Barranquilla for deliberate negligence in dealing with the marijuana traffickers, charging that "the government is more interested in protecting the drug traffickers and smugglers than honest citizens." When the Barranquilla chief of police invaded some of the city's drug mansions on a court order last year, the irate traffickers successfully demanded his transfer to Bogotá. According to the Bogotá magazine *Alternativa,* the order for the transfer came from the then minister of defense, General Abraham Varón Valencia. Outraged, the Barranquilla daily *El Nacional* noted in an editorial that "... there are serious indications that the drug traffickers have access to the office of the minister of defense to change decisions and cause people to be fired, as in the murky case of the chief of police."

Not all military and police officials are as scrupulous as the Barranquilla police commander: Among those caught in the narcotics traffic were three chiefs of the Administrative Department of Security (DAS), the police unit responsible for the drug crackdown. A lieutenant and seven officers, who were carrying thirty-six bales of marijuana in a military van, were also nabbed. The same week the van was intercepted, a shootout took place between the DAS and customs authorities over a shipment of contraband. Since the average policeman's monthly wage is only $100, a $1000-plus bribe is difficult to resist, particularly if accompanied by threats. Several police agents and judges have been murdered on the coast because they refused to cooperate with the drug smugglers.

Colombia's problem is further complicated by the increase in domestic marijuana consumption to 600,000 smokers, and by a double standard of morality for contraband, which has traditionally been accepted in the highest social circles—as was officially recognized in 1957 when the government established a free port on the Caribbean island of San Andres.

The DEA's version of the old national security theories now tries to link subversion to drugs.

Although the island has never exported anything of significance to other countries, it became a funnel for contraband goods to Colombia and a model for consumer habits. There are "San Andresitos" in every city in the country, and 520 contraband shops in Bogotá alone, supplied by the same coastal smugglers who dominate the marijuana trade.

Contraband imports include $50 million a year in smuggled petroleum from Venezuela, $125 million in contraband U.S. cigarettes and European whiskey, and $17 million in synthetic cloth. In addition to drugs, Colombian smugglers export over $150 million annually in coffee and cattle.

Until President Julio Cesar Turbay was elected in 1978, the government tended to take a similarly laissez-faire attitude toward marijuana. Turbay, a former ambassador to Washington, was stung during the election campaign by suggestions in the U.S. press that he was implicated in the drug traffic, a wholly unsubstantiated charge. (One reason for Turbay's anger was a report, leaked to CBS from Peter Bourne's White House office on health and drugs, which contained raw intelligence data about Turbay and other high government officials that was little more than a gossip column. Bourne himself was later forced to resign because of involvement in a White House drug scandal.)

In July 1978, a month before Turbay took office, Peter Bensinger, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, visited Colombia, where he strongly urged the authorities to militarize the Guajira Peninsula. Although Colombian politicians and military leaders were publicly incensed at the time, two months later Turbay put Bensinger's proposal into effect, decreeing a harsh security statute that has set the stage for a military government in one of the few surviving formal democracies in Latin America.

THE SCENARIO THAT HAS SINCE UNFOLDED shares a number of similarities with events in Argentina in 1974, when Juan Domingo Perón's widow unleashed a reign of terror. But there are also echoes of the 1960s, when the United States trained thousands of Latin American soldiers and police in counterinsurgency courses under the umbrella of "national security." Most of those programs were later phased out by the U.S. Congress when it became evident that they had contributed to the rise of right-wing military regimes and many violations of human rights. The notorious AID Public Safety Program for Third World policemen, for example, was terminated in 1974. But as often happens with congressional directives, which receive no more than lip service from the executive, police training was continued under another organization—the DEA.

A study by the General Accounting Office published in 1976 showed that U.S. aid to Latin American police agencies through the narcotics program increased by nearly 600 percent between 1973 and 1974, compensating almost exactly for the money cut off from the Public Safety Program. The types of armament and equipment previously furnished the Latin American police through AID were now being supplied by the narcotics program, GAO reported, and the police merely added narcotics control to their other activities—thus complying, at least superficially, with U.S. regulations. But even in countries with special narcotics police squads, there was no guarantee that the equipment and training supplied by the U.S. government would not be used by other police agencies for different purposes, the GAO said.

The DEA also replaced the Public Safety Program as a cover for CIA agents. According to columnist Jack Anderson, sixty-four former CIA employees now work for the DEA and thirteen narcotics agents were trained at a CIA counterespionage school.

With the transfer of money and personnel to the DEA came the same philosophy of national security that had inspired earlier counterinsurgency courses, a philosophy that is rooted in the Cold War years and attributes all social unrest to subversion. The novelty of the DEA version is that it links

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subversion to narcotics.

The first public recognition of such links was made in 1974 by José López Rega, the infamous minister of social welfare in Isabel Perón's government in Argentina. López Rega was the founder of a right-wing parapolice death squadron known as the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA), which was responsible for the deaths and disappearances of thousands of people. After Isabel's overthrow by the military, the AAA was expanded to serve as a semiofficial agency of terror against any who disagreed with the right-wing regime. López Rega's underling, police chief Héctor García Rey, had been trained in the Panama Canal Zone, with eighty Argentine policemen, and when the Public Safety Program was abolished, training and funds were supplied through the DEA. During a nationally televised press conference with U.S. Ambassador Robert Hill in May 1974, López Rega said: "We hope to wipe out the drug traffic in Argentina. We have caught guerrillas after attacks who were high on drugs. Guerrillas are the main users of drugs in Argentina. *Therefore, the antidrug campaign will automatically be an antiguerrilla campaign as well.*" (Emphasis added.) Five years later, much the same rationale was being used by the Turbay government in Colombia to justify the increasing militarization of the country.

While no one is accusing the DEA of setting up dictatorships in Latin America, Colombia's experience shows that it provides a convenient cover for human-rights violations. Over the years the military has encroached on civil authority as successively weaker governments ceded greater prerogatives to the armed forces. Turbay's predecessor, President Alfonso López Michelsen, may have turned the ultimate corner in this process after a nationwide labor strike in September 1977 paralyzed the country and led to violent clashes between strikers and military in the nation's capital. The chiefs of the armed forces subsequently gave López Michelsen an ultimatum to bring the still independent judiciary under control because it was too lenient with "subversive" workers and students.

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Winner by a narrow margin of an election in which only 30 percent of the voters bothered to turn out, Turbay campaigned on a platform to end "insecurity," a goal most Colombians agreed with at the time, in the belief that by "insecurity" Turbay meant the crime wave in the cities and the almost daily kidnappings. His promise to stop the drug traffic also was applauded. Despite ominous rumblings from the military, public opinion did not associate insecurity with labor agitation, which is a normal part of the democratic process, or with the country's half-dozen guerrilla groups, which number no more than a few hundred militants and have been around for nearly two decades without ever threatening the central government.

The antidrug programs of the DEA provide a convenient cover for human-rights violations.

During Turbay's first year in government kidnappings noticeably decreased, although the overall level of urban crime is still high, even by international standards. Some dent was made in the drug traffic but not enough to noticeably affect it. Nor have government statistics always reflected reality. After the attorney general's office announced a large seizure of cocaine and marijuana and the arrest of several traffickers in El Chocó, near the Panamanian frontier, TV Cinevisión sent one of its editors to the area to check out the story, only to discover that most of it was untrue. But more important than inflated statistics is the reversal in Turbay's preelection priorities, the government's foremost goal now being to cow the labor movement and to settle old scores with the left.

THROUGH A SECURITY STATUTE DECREED in September 1978, the military has been empowered to arrest any Colombian deemed subversive, without recourse to *habeas corpus* or other constitutional guarantees; those arrested are judged by military tribunals instead of penal courts. Since the beginning of the year, more than 2,000 persons have been arrested on subversion charges, reports Amnesty International; other estimates go as high as 4,000. Torture is commonplace, as documented in the country's still relatively free press. The majority of those arrested are union, peasant, and student leaders; of the 68,000 jailed on all kinds of charges between August 1978 and July 1979, only 597 were involved in the drug traffic, by the Justice Ministry's own admission. According to the governor of Riohacha, there has been no decrease in the level of drug violence on the coast. On the contrary, he said, 187 murders were committed in recent months, without a single suspect arrested.

Nevertheless, the reasons given for the militarization of Colombia have been the narcotics traffic and Bensinger's argument that the Guajira should be militarized because, in effect, it endangers national security. Alvaro Pérez Vives, who until recently was secretary general of the Turbay government—and by the U.S. embassy's account very helpful in negotiating drug agreements—was the first to repeat, in his defense of the security statute, López Rega's rationale by lumping together common delinquents, subversives, and drug traffickers. Turbay added another link by saying, on Spanish television, that drug traffickers were paying the Guajiros in arms and that the Indians were in turn selling them to the guerrillas, an assertion even the military has not made.

The principal spokesman for this mixed bag of security theories is the right-wing justice minister, Hugo Escobar Sierra, who is both the government's chief hatchet man and president of the National Council on Narcotics, the Colombian equivalent of the White House office on drugs. (Escobar Sierra recently announced that he will visit the FBI to study its techniques in order to apply them in Colombia, but whether against subversives or drug traffickers was not clear.) The minister insists that there have been no human-rights violations in Colombia; criticism of the security statute is due entirely to "false moralism."

Although Colombia has received a relatively small amount of narcotics-control money from the United States ($9.9 million since 1973), its military aid is the highest in Latin America ($12.7 million this year)—due to "the political or strategic conditions in Colombia," said U.S. Ambassador Diego Asencio. "The materiel is not for specific use in the area of drugs but *for the question of national security.*" (Emphasis added.) However, in recognition of Colombia's marijuana crackdown in the Guajira, said the ambassador, Congress is studying the possibility of increasing a fiscal-1980 request from $4 million in drug aid to $16 million. The authorization for the increase was introduced by Representative Benjamin Rosenthal (D-N.Y.), whose district has been wracked by drug violence. It passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee, but Rosenthal's resolution was questioned by Senator Frank Church's Foreign Relations Committee, which took a less sanguine view of the long-range impact and effectiveness of Colombia's drug program. Arguing that the differences between House and Senate were merely procedural, Ambassador Asencio assured the Colombian Senate that $14 to $16 million in narcotics aid was in the pipeline and that the Church committee's reservations had nothing to do with human rights but reflected concern with the inflationary effects of U.S. government expenditures. The ambassador also stated that he considered the amount "ridiculously" low, and held out the possibility that the House-Senate committee might approve even larger sums.

But more money for arms is not going to stop the drug traffic, and could very well hasten the process of militarization. Quite apart from the political implications of lumping narcotics trade together with legitimate social protest, prominent Colombian politicians and businessmen question militarization as counterproductive. As Colombia's former president Alberto Lleras Camargo points out, the more repression there is, the higher the price for marijuana and the greater the incentive to grow it. That incentive will continue so long as there are millions of impoverished peasants in Colombia and millions of pot smokers in the United States. All that repression does is to concentrate wealth, forcing the small,

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independent growers into the armies of the large traffickers who alone can afford the bribes and armed protection and the inevitable loss of some of the marijuana. Thus on the Colombian coast a process is taking place similar to the growth of an organized mafia under U.S. Prohibition. The presence of U.S. criminal elements, who are better organized and more dangerous than the amateur American smuggler, has contributed to the explosive situation.

WHY SHOULD OUR COUNTRY WASTE AND discredit its armed forces in combating the marijuana traffic when the United States does not do the same?" wonders Fabio Echeverri, president of the National Association of Industrialists, spokesman for Colombian business. "Colombia cannot afford to go on obeying the orders of the United States to solve a U.S. drug problem at the cost of our institutions. Our problem is different. The economy is at stake, and we have the obligation to seek solutions that serve our own interests. The rest is nonsense."

Thanks to a growing realization that Colombia is serving as a "useful idiot," in Echeverri's words, important members of Colombian society are now publicly saying that the only solution is to legalize the marijuana industry. Among the public advocates of legalization are ANIF president Ernesto Samper; Leonidas Londoño, chief spokesman for the country's coffee growers; General José Matallana, former head of the DAS, Colombia's equivalent of a combined FBI and DEA; and the leaders of agriculture and industry on the Caribbean coast. General Matallana sums up their position when he says that legalization is the "only realistic alternative to Mafia control of the traffic."

The principal problem with this pragmatic solution is that it needs U.S. approval, and Washington is not about to face up to the thorny problem of drug consumption. It is much easier to pass the buck to Colombia by urging the armed forces to militarize still other areas with marijuana plantations, including Colombia's eastern plains, or "llanos," all the while turning a blind eye to the nefarious effects of the drug-related security statute. Back home, meanwhile, in eleven states the possession and use of pot by Americans have been downgraded to misdemeanors, in the same category as a traffic violation. Who, one wonders, is corrupting whom? And where does the corruption begin? In the growing of marijuana? In trading or consuming it? Or does it begin with the laws that treat it as a police problem instead of an economic one?

Much has been written in the U.S. press about Colombia's "corrupt judges, police, and government officials," and there is no doubt that the marijuana traffic, by its very illegality, has greatly increased the level of violence and corruption in Colombian society. On the other hand, the United States also has its share of corrupt officials and criminals, though the latter are rarely presented in this light when they run afoul of Colombian authorities on a marijuana run. Among the latest in a series of "innocent victims" were a Houston fireman and a Nashville singer, who met up with the wrong gang when they landed on a clandestine runway in the Guajira. William Spradley, the fireman, was shot in the back and later taken to a Riohacha hospital, where he claimed that "savage Indians" had set upon the pair when they were forced to land because of engine trouble while en route to Venezuela to pick up some oil equipment. The news no sooner reached Houston than the mayor's office was on the telephone to the State Department demanding "action." A firemen's delegation immediately set off for Colombia, accompanied by three television crews, and there were even calls to "send in the marines" to rescue Spradley. The grotesque comedy came to an end when Spradley's copilot, Roy McLemore, confessed to the authorities that the two had indeed been on a marijuana run for which they were to have received $30,000 each.

In another case, a Lear Jet owned by Nevada's Jet Avia was flown to Santa Marta to spring from a local hospital an American marijuana pilot who had been badly burned when his plane crashed in the Guajira. The four-man crew was caught and jailed and the jet impounded, whereupon the State Department was bombarded with calls from the Nevada governor's office and congressmen demanding release of the men and the airplane. Philip Sánchez, a former U.S. ambassador to Colombia, even offered to fly down to intervene on behalf of the Americans.

Rosalynn Carter's mid-1977 visit to Bogotá was similarly motivated: The only issue of substance discussed with the government officials was greater leniency for Americans serving drug sentences.

Meantime, four American traffickers were released from the Riohacha jail by two commandos dressed in police uniforms who attacked the prison and made off into the dusty horizon in Ranger Jeeps. The prisoners were never seen again, but a small combat plane was found near the city on a clandestine runway where it had made a belly landing. Police authorities speculated that the gang had intended to bomb the jail in order to free the prisoners.

With such goings-on, it is no wonder that Colombians object to the self-serving American view that the drug traffic is

"It's only fair," says a Colombian senator, "that the United States militarize Florida, too."

all the fault of those bad guys down in South America. As to the DEA's militarization campaign in Colombia, said Senator Abelardo Forero Benavides, "It's only fair that the U.S. government militarize Florida, too."

Obviously there will be no militarization of Florida, but the possibility of a military government in Colombia no longer seems the remote speculation of three or four years ago. "Colombia has become South Americanized," said the former Conservative foreign minister, Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa, in a reference to the sea of dictatorships to the south. It is a "desperately high price to pay," added journalist Santos Calderón, for a hopeless war on a drug that has widespread social acceptance in the United States, including Carter's Washington. The logic of it all is about as comprehensible as Alice's tea party, but then, as Lewis Carroll observed, "Everything's got a moral if you can only find it." ❑

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EMPIRE: The Life, Legend and Madness of Howard Hughes, by Donald L. Barlett and James Steele. W.W. Norton, 687 pp., $15.95.

Mr. Corporate State

JONATHAN MARSHALL

"PLAYBOY, DAREDEVIL, INdustrialist, Recluse: A Very Private Billionaire." So read one newspaper headline after Howard Hughes's death on April 5, 1976. Hughes was all that and more; a legend even as he wasted away in his final years, drugged and emaciated, in penthouses from the Bahamas to Acapulco.

Donald Barlett and James Steele, prize-winning reporters for the *Philadelphia Inquirer,* have written, in more than six hundred pages, the most comprehensive biography of Hughes to date. Hughes addicts, soured by the shallowness of countless instant paperback biographies of the man, will be grateful for the lavish detail, footnotes, and index—luxuries almost unprecedented in this literature.

Appropriately enough, the authors focus on the years following 1960, when Hughes's influence on the American economy and political system were at their peak. They are clearly more at ease exploring the significance of a Las Vegas casino purchase than retelling such well-worn stories as how Hughes designed a special bra for Jane Russell, to thrill viewers of his controversial movie, *The Outlaw.* There are, in any case, plenty of other biographies that supply the Hollywood gossip.

Nevertheless, the authors' approach to their subject is fundamentally schizophrenic: They can't decide whether to concentrate on Hughes the eccentric or on Hughes the corporate boss, and thus they lose sight of what was truly significant about the man. In attempting to be encyclopedic, the authors sometimes bury the reader under masses of irrelevant detail. We learn, for example, that by the mid-1960s Hughes's kidneys were shrinking, "the left one slightly faster than the right as a result of decades of abuse of Empirin Compound No. 4, an analgesic that contains both codeine and phenacetin. . . ." Pages are devoted to minute listings of his daily routine: "That Sunday, June 18, 1972, he began his day at 2:21 a.m., watching television. At 2:55 a.m. an aide showed him the motion picture *Captain Newman.* At 4 a.m. he began eating a piece of chicken, a chore that consumed forty-five minutes. . . ." And so on, at embarrassing length.

The bizarre aspects of Hughes's life—his reclusiveness, his dependence on drugs, his germ phobia—are mere curiosities that tell us little about the governing of his empire, of which, in any case, Hughes had lost effective control long before his death. For years the "Hughes empire" was in truth controlled by a handful of top aides who managed the flow of information to their nominal boss. All calls and messages to Hughes had to be cleared first by the "Mormon mafia," his penthouse assistants who answered to their fellow Mormon and chief of staff, Bill Gay. Hughes knew only what Gay chose to let him know.

In 1970, Gay prevailed upon Hughes to give him, and two close associates, full powers "to vote and to otherwise exercise all rights" Hughes possessed as sole stockholder of his Nevada properties. Gay proceeded to fire all top employees not personally loyal to him, to seize from these ousted rivals physical control of the casinos, and to spirit Hughes off to the Bahamas to be held incommunicado. Earlier this year, heirs to the Hughes estate sued Bill Gay and his clique for taking advantage of Hughes's "reclusive nature, his drug usage and willingness to live within an environment of isolation [in order] to control his ability to communicate with others [and] reduce him to a supplicating dependency."

Since Barlett and Steele themselves provide copious evidence of this exploitation, it is disappointing to see them harp at such length on the minutiae of Hughes's personal quirks, especially in the conclusion. There, instead of making sense out of the bewildering mass of detail and assessing the impact of the Hughes empire on American society, the authors reflect only on Hughes's "obsessive-compulsive personality."

BARLETT AND STEELE showed far greater insight in their extraordinary 1975 series of articles for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* titled "The Silent Partner of Howard Hughes." Their theme was simple enough: "Though Hughes has often been portrayed as a brilliant, eccentric genius of private enterprise, a throwback to an earlier era when large companies were owned and operated by one man, the fact is the Hughes empire rests mightily on the federal government and is fed and flourishes overwhelmingly on federal dollars."

In this one sentence they described the Hughes phenomenon more incisively than in the six hundred pages of their new biography. The newspaper series, unlike the book, explicitly portrayed Hughes as the archetypal state capitalist, a product of the extraordinary marriage of business and government that was consummated in World War II and the Cold War. The corridors of power—not the marketplace—were his natural habitat.

The statistics prove their point. Between 1965 and 1974 alone, Hughes companies received more than $6 billion in federal contracts; most of them came from the military. In that same period, eight out of every ten defense contracts won by Hughes Aircraft were let without competitive bidding—at an extra cost to the taxpayer, according to Barlett and Steele, of more than $1 billion. In 1974, the federal government accounted for 71 percent of Hughes Aircraft's $1.2 billion sales, far more than for any other

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top-ten defense contractor. And the profits were handsome: One Hughes subsidiary cleared 30 percent on its work for the CIA.

Other branches of the Hughes organization also received special favors. Hughes casinos were licensed and exempted from antitrust action, contrary to clear state and federal regulations. The medical institute was declared tax exempt despite its flagrant violations of the 1969 Tax Reform Act. And, in the face of Hughes's violation of just about every rule in the book, the Civil Aeronautics Board in 1969 approved his acquisition of Air West. The CAB even granted him special mail subsidies; indeed, between 1970 and 1975, Hughes Air West received $55 million in such federal handouts—more than Hughes paid for the airline in the first place.

What gave Hughes such clout? He simply invested in politicians on a grand scale, without regard to party or ideology. He put nearly every politician in Nevada on the payroll; nationally, Richard Nixon, John Connally, and Senators Birch Bayh, Alan Cranston, and John Tower were among the many recipients of his largesse, which ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. In 1968, Hughes wrote a memo to his top Nevada aide, Robert Maheu, that summed it all up: "Now, one other thing. I read an article in the paper saying H.H.H. [Hubert H. Humphrey] is sore-pressed for solvency at the moment. Are we marching through this obvious opening? I mean, in a really big and definite way?" Three months later, as Maheu and others have testified, he marched through the open door of Humphrey's limousine in Beverly Hills and left the candidate a briefcase containing $50,000 cash.

Sometimes Hughes won friends—especially in the Pentagon—with the lure of high-paying jobs awaiting them when they left government service. Edward P. Morgan, a Washington lawyer who represented Hughes before the CAB, recorded the gist of a conversation he had with his old college buddy and CAB member Robert T. Murphy, "[H]e was exploring the possibility of an association with Air West as its president," Morgan noted bluntly. "He said that he has always had a profound admiration for Mr. Hughes as an aviation pioneer and industrialist and that he would welcome the opportunity to become a part of his 'team.' . . . He would be a tower of strength at the CAB (and in Congress) to obtain what we want and to head off what we don't want," Morgan concluded. In the end Murphy didn't get the job, but in the meantime Hughes got Murphy's vote for the Air West acquisition.

HUGHES HAD ANOTHER trick up his sleeve: a covert and immensely profitable relationship with the CIA. As Robert Maheu once recalled, "Hughes was extremely anxious to get himself into an alliance with the CIA that would protect him from investigation by other government agencies." Barlett and Steele recount well-known facts about Maheu's own work for the CIA (as head of the plot to kill Castro), the $350 million Glomar Explorer fiasco, and the CIA links of the Hughes empire's Washington representative, Robert Bennett. But nowhere do they fully explore just how longstanding and intimate were the relations between these billion-dollar organizations:

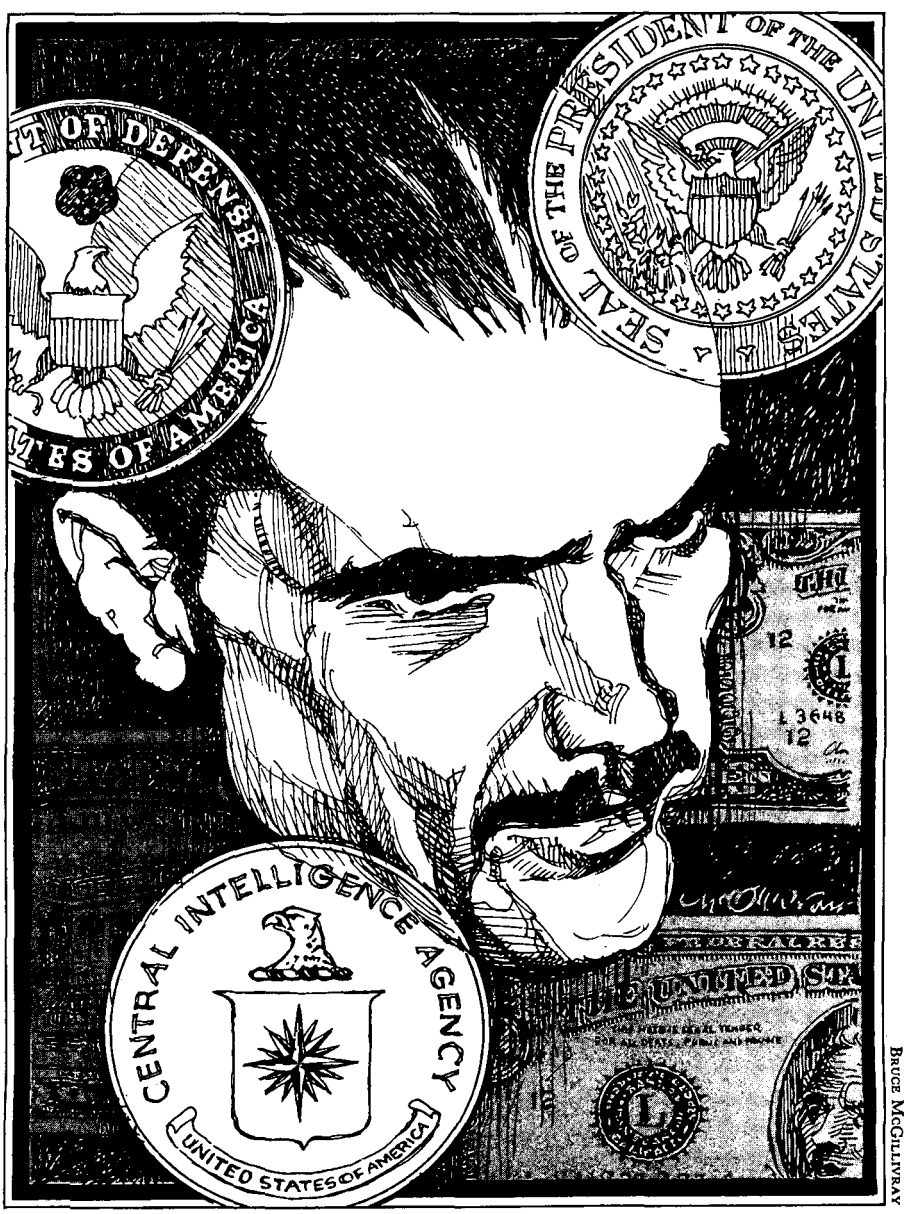
—Hughes Aircraft, one Pentagon official told *Time* magazine, "is a captive company of the CIA. Their interests are completely merged." The company, which Charles Colson claimed was the biggest CIA contractor, helped develop the CIA's top-secret spy satellites.

—Various Hughes companies have acted as "paymaster-type fronts" for CIA agents around the world, and have hired retired CIA officers, according to the *Washington Post*.

—The security company for Hughes's casinos, International Intelligence, Inc., employs former high-ranking officers of the CIA, FBI, and National Security Agency.

—During the early 1960s, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute leased Cay Sal, one of its islands in the Bahamas, to the CIA as a base for sabotage raids against Cuba.

Such relationships help explain the



BRUCE MCGILLVRAY

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charmed life of the Hughes corporations. Thus the blatant favoritism shown by the IRS toward the Hughes Medical Institute, which so outrages Barlett and Steele, is really no mystery; the IRS regularly ignores the misdeeds of foundations tied to the CIA, as Representative Wright Patman discovered to his surprise during a banking committee investigation in 1965. Mitchell Rogovin, then an IRS official responsible for protecting such foundations from IRS investigations, went on to become the CIA's general counsel.

Howard Hughes bought political leaders as routinely as he bought gambling casinos. He was a disastrous business manager—Barlett and Steele demonstrate that beyond doubt—but a masterful manipulator of politicians and government bureaucracies. Therein lies the secret of his success, and the key to understanding the place of his "empire" in American society.

THE VARIORUM EDITION OF THE COMPLETE POEMS OF THOMAS HARDY, edited by James Gibson. Macmillan, 969 pp., $50.00.

Every inch a professional

DONALD DAVIE

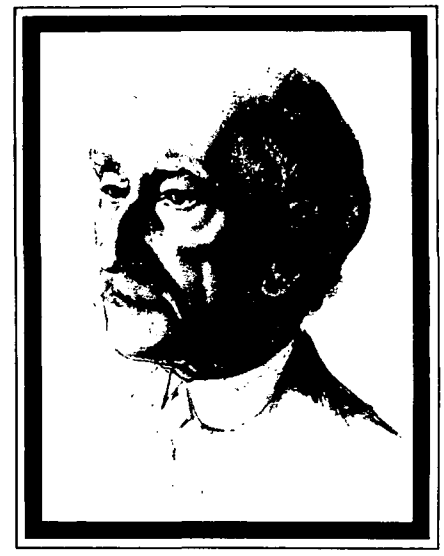
HART CRANE SAID IN 1927, "I think him perhaps the greatest technician in English verse since Shakespeare." And yet ten years later Yeats could decide that his work "lacked technical accomplishment." Is this a disagreement about Thomas Hardy's poetry? Isn't it rather about "technique," what that word means and what it ought to mean when we apply it to poetry? The latter, surely. For if we think of such matters as unusual and difficult meters, ambitious rhyme schemes, and complicated stanza-structures, everyone must agree that Hardy's technical expertise is conspicuous, not to say obtrusive. And so if we still feel uneasily that Yeats wasn't altogether wrong, we must be thinking that Hardy's technical adroitness, though undeniable, isn't of the sort that we any longer look for, or are glad to find. After so many years when so much of the verse we most admire has been unmetered, unrhymed, and nonstanzaic, nothing is more likely than that we should find Hardy the poet a fiercely expert technician and yet (for that very reason, indeed) lacking in "accomplishment," or in sophistication. Are we right to think like this, or is it just a way of defending our own varieties of self-regarding and self-generating shapelessness, to which Hardy's tight shapes are a standing reproach?

Anyhow, we mustn't be bemused by the tidy and intricate shapes that Hardy's poems take on the page, or on the air when they are spoken aloud. For the same troublesome question, Was Crane right or was Yeats?, arises when we look at Hardy's vocabulary. We've lately heard from Robert Kent about Allen Tate in Minneapolis "on a Sunday evening of drinks and friends," insisting on a reading of Hardy's "The Convergence of the Twain," and pointing out in that famous anthology piece "too many dead words, dead then as now, and all the more obtuse for having been long dead in Shelley. 'Stilly,' for example." Odd though it is to have this charge pressed by Tate, himself much addicted to freakish and recondite vocabulary, all the same it is fair comment, and ought to be faced squarely—particularly now, when Hardy's coming out of copyright has given further impetus to the steep rise in his poetic reputation so noticeable in recent years, particularly in the U.K. Is Hardy's vocabulary, like his meters and his stanza-structures, to be thought of as merely ingenious, rather than anything more exalted?

It's easy to see that Tate was right to object to "stilly." To begin with, no one knows how to *say* it—for the good reason that no one, outside of poetry, has ever heard it *said.* It comes in the third line:

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her,
stilly couches she.

And we perceive at once that the awkwardness is compounded: Not only is the heraldic and stilted word "couches" open to very similar objections, but the word-order in which it is made to live along with "stilly" and "she" is an affront to all normal usage, whether written or spoken. Anyone may decide



that this is an exorbitant price to pay for the intricate regularity of meter, rhyme, and stanza-shape; and so, that it is technically resourceful, but not technically accomplished.

It so happens that this poem is one of the very few on which this variorum edition casts some light. Hardy, as every one knows, was determined to cover his tracks; and despite James Gibson's protestations to the contrary, he covered his tracks too successfully to leave for a variorum editor anything but very meager gleanings. There are no manuscripts that can be called first drafts, and precious few that can be called second drafts. What Hardy left, very carefully and deliberately, are fair copies; though he tinkered with these as he prepared them for publication and sometimes republication, his tinkerings—though exhaustively reproduced by Gibson—are very seldom of much or any interest. The only interesting variants occur when a poem was initially written to mark an occasion, and so (we may suppose) to meet a tight deadline. This is the case with "The Convergence of the Twain," which first appeared in May 1912 on the souvenir program of the Dramatic and Operatic Matinée in Aid of the *Titanic* Disaster Fund, at Covent Garden. Alas, "stilly couches she" appears unchanged from that first printing through all later ones. Hardy, it appears, at no time shared or foresaw the discomfort that we feel with it. And in the corresponding place in the second stanza, the same is true of "rhythmic tidal lyres"—a phrase that has always made me wince, though I'm not sure why:

Cold currents thrid, and turn
to rhythmic tidal lyres.

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This was originally:

The cold, calm currents strike
their rhythmic tidal lyres.

And one perceives the nicety of the questions that face the revising poet, as well as the properly responsive reader, when we reflect (as surely we must) that the verb "thrid," archaic though it is, is certainly an improvement on the uninteresting and heavy-handed alliteration of "cold, calm currents."

These are minutiae. Now as in Hardy's lifetime most people prefer to paint with a broader brush, both when talking about poems and, one suspects, when writing them. Yet if "technique" means anything (or "craftsmanship," or "workmanship"), it must surely mean patiently taking pains over one after another of these little dilemmas as they crop up in the processes of writing and rewriting. That's not to say, however, that every incidental quandary is equal to every other. In a poem of any length or any interest, there are moments that we recognize as crucial; triumphant solutions at these points can more than make up for makeshifts elsewhere. There must be others besides me who recognize in this poem two such cruxes in particular. One comes at the start of the sixth stanza when, the question having been posed how and why the disaster happened, the poet embarks upon an answer that will satisfy him if it doesn't satisfy us. This crucial "turn" is triumphantly managed with the surprisingly dry and deadpan colloquialism, "Well":

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing . . .

And it is astonishing and instructive to discover that this came very late. For in the version from the souvenir program we read:

For, while was fashioning
This ship of swiftest wing . . .

—utterly limp!
The other triumph comes, surely, just two words away from the end:

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said 'Now!' And each one hears,
And consummation comes,
and jars two hemispheres.

Everything here is masterly: "Consummation" clinches the sexual metaphor involved in calling the ship, the human artifact, "she," and Nature, the iceberg who is her "sinister mate," by implication "he"; and "jars two hemispheres" is only one audacious inch away from the unfeeling headline: Marine Disaster Shocks Europe and America. "Jar" is thus at one and the same time the physical shock of the collision, the metaphorical shock conveyed as the telegraph wires begin to hum with the news, and a sort of mythological or metaphysical shock at the moment of a monstrous sexual coupling. It is, we might say, a stroke of genius. And so how disconcerting it is, to discover that this word too came in only with revision! For the souvenir program dissipates the entire multiple effect:

And consummation comes,
and clouds *two hemispheres.*

WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE of this? We may well be hesitant. But one inference we might draw is that up to and through quite late drafts of a poem the poet may be principally concerned with getting right the design and disposition of the

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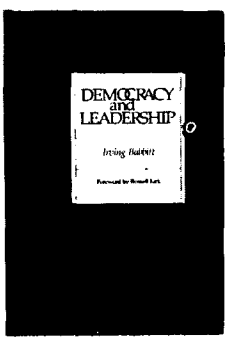

Democracy and Leadership

By Irving Babbitt

A penetrating work of political and moral philosophy, first published in 1924, *Democracy and Leadership* is packed with wisdom. Irving Babbitt was a distinguished professor of French literature at Harvard and a leader of the intellectual movement called American Humanism. This was his only directly political book, and in it Babbitt applies the principles of humanism to the civil social order. He summarizes the principal political philosophies; contrasts Rousseau with Burke; describes true and false liberals; distinguishes between ethical individualism and destructive egoism; and stands up for work and duty. *Democracy and Leadership* joins the broken links between politics and morals—and that accomplishment marks it as a work of genius. With a foreword by Russell Kirk. Hardcover $9.00, Softcover $4.00.

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whole, the architecture—leaving details quite provisionally brushed in, as expedients that will serve until he has the main lines firmly established. If so, it seems clear that "technique" ought to comprehend this disposition of the masses, no less than it comprehends fastidious niceties of detail. Another inference might turn on what Robert Graves records Hardy saying to him: "Why! . . . I have never in my life taken more than three, or perhaps four, drafts for a poem. I am afraid of it losing its freshness." James Gibson, who quotes this, seems to think that his own labors suggest Hardy was throwing dust in Graves's eyes, as we know that he did with other people who quizzed him about his writing.

But I think this is unwarranted; we might just as well take Hardy at his word, and believe that when he spoke of "freshness" in a poem he meant something that he was aware of and valued, which he hoped that a good reader would recognize and value likewise. Certainly Gibson presents no evidence that Hardy was, like Graves himself, like Auden sometimes, like both Ransom and Tate at times, an inveterate reviser, the sort that doesn't know when to stop, when to leave well alone. On the contrary, since all his revisions in "The Convergence of the Twain" are notable improvements, may he not have recognized that "stilly couches" and "rhythmic tidal lyres" were not quite right, yet have agreed with himself to let them stand, rather than run the risk of overpainting, losing freshness? This is to suggest that in poetry leaving well enough alone may sometimes also mean leaving the not quite well enough alone. And would that perception come under the rubric of "technique"? Probably not, as we usually understand the word; though it would surely be part of what we understand by "craftsmanship" or "workmanship."

We get no help in these delicate matters from James Gibson, who tells us, "The commonest reason for revision is stylistic, and the second commonest the sharpening of meaning." With this assumption that a poet's style has nothing to do with the sharpening of his meanings, we are back with a simplemindedness that we are inured to in bibliographers and editors. Gibson thinks that Hardy was "truly great"; he speaks of "his creative genius, his integrity, the quality of his feeling, and the professionalism of his approach to his writing." Here too that odd emphasis on "professionalism" will raise in some minds the unlovely figure of the cold-blooded verse-technician. Especially now, after the biographer Robert Gittings has shown unsparingly how deficient Hardy was as a husband, and how he immolated both his wives on the altar of his writing, "professionalism" may have a distinctly uncomplimentary ring. We might take some of the sting out of it if we suggest that one characteristic of the true professional is knowing when a job is, though not quite perfect, nevertheless finished; when to let it go, though with some imperfections on its head; when to write it off and turn to something else. As for Hardy's being an unfeeling husband, we may reflect there is no rule that says great artists make considerate spouses, but a great deal of evidence very markedly to the contrary. *That* unpleasant implication of "professional" we'd do well to remember!

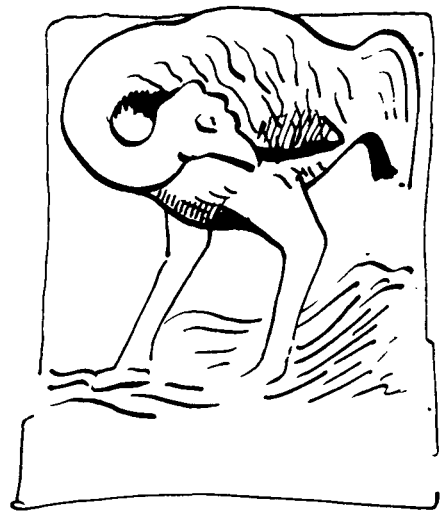
THE GREAT STATUARY OF CHINA, by Victor Segalen. Edited by A. Joly-Segalen, translated by E. Levieux. University of Chicago Press, 192 pp., illus., $20.00.

A vision of China

SIMON LEYS

THIS IS A HIGHLY UNUSUAL book. Fervent admirers of Victor Segalen (1878–1919)—I myself belong to this parish, even though I harbor a few heretical thoughts on our patron saint—will certainly be grateful to the publisher who had the idea of making this posthumous essay available in translation to a larger public. But should they be?

The problem is not simply that we "happy few" will have to reconcile ourselves to having to share democratically an exclusive cult with the broader masses, as befits this age of universal education and instant culture: It is more fundamentally that having Segalen's work more widely available, however commendable in itself, may actually mislead many of those who will purchase this book in the belief that it is



some sort of outline history of Chinese monumental sculpture.

Such misunderstanding would not be new and Segalen's creative method should bear some responsibility for it. The very competence that he displayed in the various disciplines and activities of his multiform career—medicine, ethnography, exploration, archaeology, sinology—always tended somewhat to obscure the deeper unity of his personality. Actually, all his enterprises were merely the diverse expressions of one single-minded poetical endeavor. He fooled some readers from the beginning: After all, his doctoral thesis in medicine (*Les cliniciens ès-lettres*) looked scientific enough to the examiners who awarded him his degree. His first book, *Les Immémoriaux,* was recently reissued as an ethnographic monograph! (More to the point, at the time of its first publication it was proposed for the Goncourt Prize, which rewards the best *novel* of the year). His best collection of prose-poems, *Stèles,* presents such a cultivated ambiguity that when it first appeared, it led many readers to believe that it was an authentic anthology of ancient epigraphs translated from the Chinese.

It is the very quality of his scholarship and erudition that provoked these misunderstandings. In *The Great Statuary of China,* the accuracy of his historical and archaeological information is not in question; actually Segalen's expertise and discoveries were quite impressive. Nevertheless the reader should be aware that here, as in all his other writings, Segalen's aim is not to communicate a certain quantity of knowledge, judgments, or ideas, but to create a poetical

SIMON LEYS is the pseudonym of Pierre Ryckmans, of the department of Chinese, Australian National University. Among his books are Chinese Shadows *and* Broken Images: Essays on Chinese Culture and Politics.

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world, uniquely his own, for which China merely provides a sublime and majestic pretext. (At the end of his career, he stigmatized the foolishness of those authors who wish to write *the* book on China, and he lucidly defined the exact purpose and meaning of his own work:

> *The* book on China. By what tarantula have they all been bitten? Defining, cataloging, classifying! First of all, every affirmation on China (or, indeed, on anything) calls forth its own negation. . . . And to what end? This game leaves me cold indeed! Those who play it are people who believe that by pronouncing their comical verdicts, they have spoken the last word. I believe that I am not one of them! It is a question of how to make people see. It is not a question of saying what I think of the Chinese (to confess the truth, I do not have any opinion of them), but of saying what I imagine of them; and not in the phony form of some kind of "documentary" book, but *in the form, alive and real beyond all reality, of an artistic creation.* . . . Fundamentally, it is neither Europe nor China that I have come here to seek, *but a vision of China.*

Utterances such as these inspired H. Bouillier, his best biographer and critic, to conclude: "It would be fruitless to seek in the works of Segalen a document about China. He never entertained the pretension or the fatuity to believe that he could provide us with a key to understand China, and nothing irritated him so much as to hear friends telling him after the publication of *Stèles* and *Peintures*: 'You have understood China so well!' . . . His China is a mythical China, shaped beyond reality by the power of imagination.") The documentation so painstakingly and scrupulously accumulated by the author was gathered for the sole purpose of giving flesh to an imaginary vision.

In this respect, Segalen's method was not unlike that of Flaubert undertaking vast historico-archaeological researches before writing *Salammbô,* but Flaubert, being a greater artist, knew better how to take liberties with his documentation. Even when he came to writing *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and his frenzied hunt for factual information reached nearly insane proportions, his creative genius, growing apace with his encyclopedic mania, was able to feed it into his literary vision whose scope and vitality developed in the same measure. (This reference to Flaubert is not arbitrary. Segalen repeatedly acknowledged his debt to *Salammbô* and *La Tentation de St. Antoine.*) Segalen's problem was that he remained largely the prisoner of his erudition, and could not fully subordinate it to his creativeness; even though he was not a scholar in the strict sense of the word, his scholarly baggage was often too heavy for his original, yet narrow, poetical powers.

It is true that all the writings of Segalen are poems; yet, too often, this poetical nature is not made obvious enough, and here perhaps lies Segalen's artistic failure. It would be easy enough for an unitiated reader simply to take *The Great Statuary of China* at face value, and to confuse it with an essay on the subject indicated in the title. (That danger is further increased by this translation—linguistically competent, but literarily flat.)

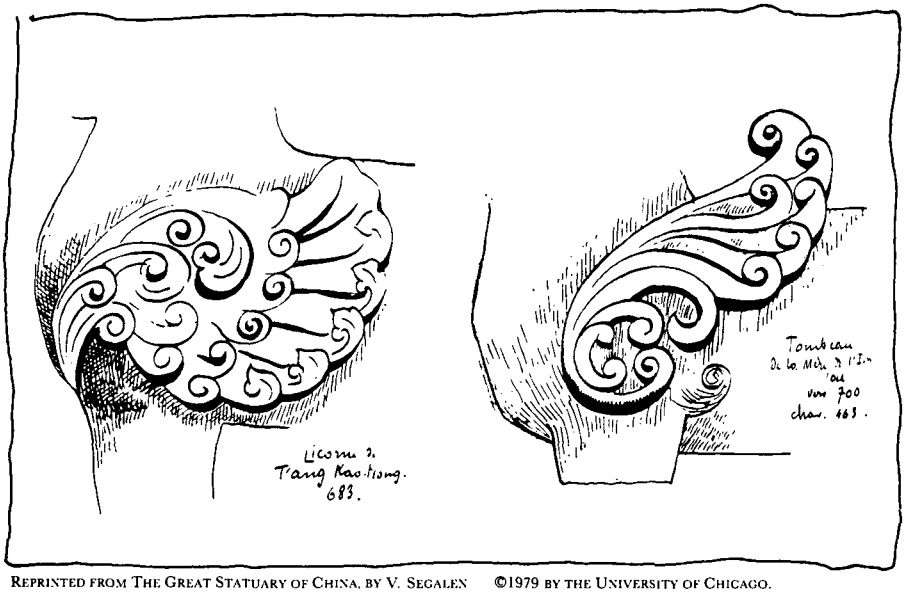
The puzzlement of our bona fide reader will thus be great when he encounters a statement such as, "Buddhist sculpture has no place in this book, being neither Chinese nor beautiful." Even one such proposition would be enough to disqualify any book of art history; but in the context of Segalen's visionary construction, it is perfectly consistent with his aesthetic image of a "China myth" whose "form, alive and real beyond all reality, [is that] of an artistic creation." In same fashion, his contemptuous dismissal of republican China in the name of the imperial myth ("Chinese history is above all the history of the Celestial Mandate . . . the most authentic monument erected by human memory throughout four thousand years"; "the republic is nothing more than a passing rebellion . . .") need not shock or scandalize. It is not a historical assessment or a political judgment, but an aesthetic proposition—after all, artistic creation usually results from the fierce and forceful pursuit of some prejudice.

Artists like Segalen are far greater than the sum of their written legacies.

The basic trouble with Segalen's endeavor—which doomed it from the start, but also made it so attaching, even tragic—is that China does not lend itself to being exalted or reduced with impunity to mythical dimensions. It is too hugely, intensely, and fiercely alive, and the sheer weight of its reality was bound to crush the attempt of our hapless poet.

SOME ARTISTS ARE INFERIOR to their creations: One thinks of Claudel, for instance. (Segalen greatly admired his works and rightly distrusted the man.) Faced with his cosmic cathedrals of poetry, who would imagine that the architect was that mean little man with the mind of a stockbroker? Yet others, on the contrary, like Segalen, are far greater than the sum total of their written legacies. In Segalen's works, this kind of fundamental incompleteness was due perhaps less to artistic shortcomings than to the unattainable height at which he had set his aim. In this sense, if we deem his creation to have ultimately failed, it must be added immediately that his was a noble failure, in value and interest far eclipsing many literary successes.

In this overall assessment, an exception must be made for his posthumously published novel *René Leys* (from which, in jest, I had the impudence to borrow half of my pen-name; my only excuse is



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that when I committed this indiscretion, *René Leys* was known to only a handful of devotees. Had I foreseen its subsequent resurrection, I would have looked elsewhere for a less conspicuous pseudonym). Among Segalen's dense and belabored writings, sometimes overloaded with Purposes and Meanings, *René Leys* (U.S. edition, 1974; published by J. Philip O'Hara, Inc., New York) stands out as a miracle of effortless grace. Happily dashed off in three months, described by the author himself as a kind of joke (jokes of shy, introverted artists ought always to be taken very seriously), it is a pure masterpiece that fifty years in advance explored all the avenues of the "Nouveau roman" without stumbling into any of its pitfalls. A novel that was also intended as a sarcastic manifesto against novelists and their storytelling, but keeps the reader breathless like a first-class detective thriller—if it alone succeeded is it not because here Segalen was dealing with precisely the impossibility of embracing reality?

COLLECTED LETTERS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT, edited by Ralph M. Wardle. Cornell University Press, 439 pp., $25.00.

Vindicated woman

MARINA WARNER

VIEWED AS A NARRATIVE, the life of Mary Wollstonecraft is a brilliantly wrought cautionary tale about the splendors and miseries of womankind: the inspired, brainy, volatile writer and philosopher who loves recklessly and is fecklessly abandoned, with a child born out of wedlock at a time—1794—when bastardy was accepted among country folk but hushed up in higher circles in town. In 1859 George Eliot portrayed Hetty Sorrel killing her illegitimate child; that was barely two generations after Mary's daughter Fanny committed suicide, perhaps because she too felt the stigma.

MARINA WARNER is the author of The Dragon Empress *and* Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary.

The Wollstonecraft story has a tragic end. Mary found intellectual companionship and other pleasures in her marriage to William Godwin, the philosopher; only six months later, after the birth of her second daughter, Mary, she died of puerperal fever, the illness that was the principal reaper of women in those days.

But there were splendors too: the triumph of her brilliant extended essay of 1792, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; the glory, in posterity's eyes, of her daughter Mary Shelley, author of the visionary work *Frankenstein* and a bit of a genius in her way too; and above all the irreducible spirit with which Mary Wollstonecraft brought off her pioneering life style. "It seems I am to be the first of a new genus," she wrote to her sister Everina. She was then beginning to earn her living independently as assistant, translator, editor, and in-house writer for the London publisher Joseph Johnson. Maria Edgeworth and Erasmus Darwin, among others, were on his distinguished list.

Beyond the narrative with all its drama, there is an equally absorbing aspect: How does a philosopher with an ideology of personal fulfillment and a concept of personal emancipation as resolute as Mary Wollstonecraft's put her theories into practice? Through her extant letters, collected here for the first time by Ralph M. Wardle, we see her in only a half-light, for the correspondence is a fragmentary chronicle of her mind. We see that when Godwin formally married her he was so dismayed that he, apostle of free love, should have failed to stand by his principles, that he asked for the marriage to be kept quiet; for a time he and Mary lived in different lodgings and wrote notes to each other to arrange meetings. Mary declared, "It is my wish that Mr. Godwin should visit and dine out as formerly, and I shall do the same; in short, I still mean to be independent, even to the cultivating of sentiments and principles in my children's minds (should I have more) which he disavows." In Mary's own case, she lived up to her convictions without resorting to subterfuges, and with remarkable courage. She had a grand, emotional loyalty to her perception of herself as a very fine product of the enlightenment: at once steely and melting, rational and spontaneous.

She was a disciple of Rousseau, whose *Émile* she read in 1787, and her correspondence is filled with a Rousseauesque trust in the basic adaptability of human nature to higher things such as, "I like to see starts of affection and humanity—and on many occasions would have people consult their own heart only, and, if conscience does not check them, act with vigor and dignity . . ." It is entirely characteristic of Mary Wollstonecraft, however, that she finishes this sentence with a reference not to her revolutionary mentor, but to St. Paul. Throughout the experiment that was her life, it seems she never grasped how boldly she crossed traditions, how unconventional she was. This admirable heedlessness of the world's opinion strengthened her already redoubtable personal resources: Mary Wollstonecraft, listening to her heart, truly carried out the actions it prompted.

Listening only to her heart, Wollstonecraft never grasped how heedless she was of the world's opinion.

Some of these are illuminated by her letters. At the age of 26, she arranged for her sister Eliza to escape from her husband and disappear into hiding with her in London. On the journey Eliza "bit her wedding ring to pieces." Later, in Newington Green, the sisters set up a school together, and Mary met and fell under the influence of Dr. Richard Price and his circle of Dissenting radical liberals and revolutionary sympathizers. The hard work that soon became her habit began: She taught, translated, read, even endured a spell as a governess in Ireland, giving away her dearly earned money with open-handed generosity to less able and less industrious friends. She seems to have found nothing difficult: In a letter of 1788 she tells one of these beneficiaries that she is translating "a work of importance" and is about to do another. She never comments on the abstruseness of the weighty German tome (Christian Gotthilf Salzmann's *Elements of Morality*) and we never learn how she taught herself German.

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, her most famous work, was written in a breathless six weeks. She never lets a line of self-congratulation pass her lips. She merely comments happily that the book may have found her "an opportunity of settling *very* advantageous in the matri-

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monial line. . . ." But nothing more of this is mentioned. Instead, she met Gilbert Imlay, an American, who was tinted with all the glamor of the war of national liberation and the new democracy; he had even written a Rousseauesque evocation of the simple life in the Kentucky backwoods. She concurred with his exhilarating progressive views about the rottenness of marriage and the sovereignty of love.

SOON MARY, WHO REGARDED herself as bound to Imlay by a bond more sacred than sacrament or law—that of the heart—was pregnant, then a mother, and then abandoned in the time-honored fashion of women the length and breadth of the patriarchal world. That Mary understood this did not help her. She had been an entranced mistress, writing to Imlay with touching confidence that she had begun "to form a new theory respecting men"; she was a blissful mother, writing again to him that "I still continue to be a slave to the child. She indeed rewards me, for she is a sweet little creature; for, setting aside a mother's fondness (which, by the bye, is growing on me, her little intelligent smiles sinking into my heart), she has an astonishing degree of sensibility and observation."

When she realized, after months on her own with the baby in France, that Gilbert had set up house with another woman, she still wanted him back: according to Claire Tomalin's recent biography, even proposed a *ménage à trois*. This does not appear in the letters, nor does the suicide she attempted when she found Imlay adamant. He had used the principles of emancipation against Mary for his own short-term advantage, as sometimes happens today to women as a consequence of the pill. He soon stopped paying anything toward Fanny's upbringing, and disappeared into obscurity.

Despite a succession of conspicuously useless nursemaids Mary managed to rough out a comedy about her life, and then to travel through Scandinavia—Fanny in tow—and edit her correspondence into her last published work, the discursive and entertaining *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Denmark, Norway and Sweden*. She never forgot the wound of Imlay's desertion, but it did not break her mettle.

The year after the publication of *Letters* (they do not appear in this volume of Wardle's) she was dead. Fanny was three and a half at the time, and Godwin brought her up along with Mary's other baby on his own, with great tenderness.

Ralph Wardle has collected all of Mary Wollstonecraft's surviving correspondence with scrupulousness and diligence. Unfortunately his volume contains no revelations, because Wardle himself published Mary's letters to Godwin in 1966, and Mary's letters to Imlay, in their surviving expurgated version, were published immediately after her death by Godwin himself; they have since been twice reprinted, in 1879 and 1908. The three important biographies of Mary, Wardle's own of 1951, Eleanor Flexner's of 1972, and Claire Tomalin's of 1974, draw on the material now published and bring all the contextual enrichment necessary to give the letters depth.

Mary's letters, without her biography, are not distinguished as pieces of polemic or lyricism; their interest depends on knowledge of her character and her circumstances. She did not

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March 1979 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Albert Einstein, a founding sponsor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. To commemorate the event, the Bulletin published a special issue in his honor. The contributors are: Bernard T. Feld, Harrison Brown, Glenn T. Seaborg, Joseph Rotblat, M. A. Markov, Hannes Alfven, Margaret Gowing, Spencer Weart, Alva Myrdal, Toshiyuki Toyoda as well as recollections of Eugene Rabinowitch, James Franck, Leo Szilard and J. Robert Oppenheimer.

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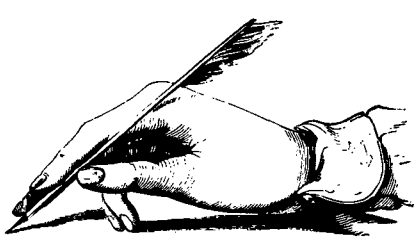
write to some of her most interesting friends—or if she did, the letters have not survived; nor did she spar in private with her famous adversaries like Edmund Burke. She comments only rarely on contemporary events. Her one chilling glimpse of the Paris of the Terror has been quoted frequently:

> About nine o'clock this morning, the king passed by my window, moving silently along (excepting now and then a few strokes on the drum, which rendered the stillness more awful) through empty streets, surrounded by the national guards, who, clustering around the carriage, seemed to deserve their name. The inhabitants flocked to their windows, but the casements were all shut; not a voice was heard, nor did I see anything like an insulting gesture. For the first time since I entered France, I bowed to the majesty of the people. . . .

PERHAPS BECAUSE THERE are so many really good accounts of Mary's life, Wardle has skimped on background information. Though he is meticulous with his editing, he blurs one important aspect of her career. Mary first came to prominence in English letters in 1790 with her pamphlet *A Vindication of the Rights of Men.* She was an unknown, self-taught novice and she leaped to the defense of her mentor, Dr. Price, whom Edmund Burke had viciously attacked in his famous conservative manifesto, *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

Impulsive as ever, Mary would not stomach it, and she set about taking to task the most eminent brains in the kingdom—with brilliant results. Praises poured in to Johnson's house, including William Roscoe's ballad in which she was apostrophized as an "Amazon" and defender of true liberty. In his notes, Wardle places the moment of fame after the publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* which in fact took place two years later. This is misleading. In our contemporary fascination with feminism, it should never be forgotten that Mary Wollstonecraft became an acknowledged political writer—David to Burke's Goliath—in the public arena of general polemics, where her sex gave her no special claim to a hearing on her subject. ❏



FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, by Walter Berns. Basic Books, 214 pp., $10.95.

Death wish

DAVID GORDON

*ONE OF THE FEW UNDER*statements in this bathetic book is the one implied in its title. Berns not only supports the death penalty, he proposes to make a circus of it. "Executions must be witnessed, and witnessed by the public, which means not hidden from the view of all but prison personnel and a few others." Mercifully, "no ordinary citizen can be required to witness them." Instead, selected members of the legislature should be on hand to represent the masses; by doing so, they serve to enhance "the awesome dignity of the law."

The arguments that Berns arrays in support of these examples of refined moral sensibility are, as one might expect, bizarre. He begins by pointing out that certain heinous crimes, such as the assassination of President Kennedy, arouse great popular anger, a response he maintains is entirely justified. Unchecked, however, this emotion can lead to lynchings and other displays of undue exuberance. The remedy is clear: The state must tame the anger, exercising its "educative function" in order to promote the majesty of the law. Berns never bothers to explain exactly what constitutes the awesome dignity of a gas chamber or an electric chair.

But this is the least of his problems. Berns makes no attempt to establish any more objective standard for his penology than state-guided popular anger. At one point, he denies that all those convicted of first-degree murder deserve to die. "A properly drawn statute will allow the death penalty only for the most awful crimes: treason, some murders, and some particularly vile rapes." Apparently, one is supposed to just see that these crimes, and only these, render those convicted of them suitable for a starring role in one of Berns's extravaganzas. No doubt the same faculty of intuition is to be employed in deciding which particular displays of anger represent moral responses. In addition to the instances of popular rage cited by Berns, mobs have been known to become unruly over someone's having the wrong skin color or religion; not having Berns constantly at one's beck and call, one would welcome a discussion of individual rights in order to determine which necktie parties the state should take over and sanctify.

Berns doesn't see it this way. An attempt to modify popular passions by a theory of rights is just what he does not want. "We want to live among people who . . . do not think exclusively or even primarily of their own rights." According to the political theory that underlies the book, the assertion of rights connotes the narrow-minded pursuit of self-interest, and no society can endure on such a selfish basis. Only if everyone bows down before the Common Good—or, more exactly, its earthly vicar, the state—can the danger of social chaos be surmounted. "What is said in Psalms about the Lord must also be said about the law," Berns states, "and as belief in divine reward and punishment declines, it must be said more emphatically: we must trust in the law, and those who do will be rewarded." Exalting the law's majesty (aided by a judicious execution now and then) is required to make sure everyone abandons his rights with sufficient élan.

*BERNS'S ASSAULT ON LIB*erty will not stand examination. For one thing, it fails to show that the members of a society founded on individual rights must be motivated by the selfishness that he equates with self-interest. In point of fact, rights merely define the sphere in which someone may act; nothing at all need be stipulated about the personal values that will guide action within that sphere. Perhaps Berns has misread the Declaration of Independence and thinks that it advocates the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of selfishness.

One may readily concede to Berns that some societies, e.g., Nazi Germany, would not exist without the constant readiness for self-immolation on behalf of the state that he preaches. But he nowhere gives any reason for thinking that the existence of such societies is desirable. If a particular form of social organization does not serve the interests of its members, why should they maintain it? Berns severely berates Albert Camus for claiming that the death penalty is inconsistent with human dignity;

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Camus, he charges, recognizes no values beyond bare survival and therefore cannot properly speak of dignity at all. Whatever the truth of Berns's contention about Camus, which seems to be based almost exclusively on *L'Étranger,* it comports oddly with his implied view that the bare survival of any society needs no justification. One would have thought that the maxim, "Whatever is, is right," belonged to the legal positivists rather than to their polar adversaries, the school of Leo Strauss, to which Berns has long professed allegiance. However surprising it may be to have to charge him with going over to the enemy camp, his virtually total failure to specify the criteria of the good society leaves little alternative.

Indeed, the moment anything suggestive of his rights is mentioned, Berns goes on the warpath. He recoils from the suggestion that restitution for the victims of aggression is desirable. This might lead to the dreadful "substituting [of] a law of contracts for a law of crimes." Why, then the state might not be able to punish at all; and one must never forget, Berns writes, that "the criminal law must be made awful, by which I mean, awe-inspiring, or commanding 'profound respect or reverential fear.'" In a system based on restitution, Berns speculates, people would insure themselves against crime, which would "of course" increase crime. Of course—after all, everyone knows that automobile insurance encourages motor accidents because the companies are anxious to pay out settlements and they therefore incite crashes.

Berns never explains what constitutes the awesome dignity of an electric chair.

THE EDIFICE OF STATE idolatry that Berns erects collapses under the slightest scrutiny. He wishes to found punishment on socially tamed anger, but most people are unaware of most crimes, so exactly who is supposed to be irate? Furthermore, although he claims that his flimflam about the majesty of the law is a retributive theory of punishment, the notion that people need to be overawed by the state in order to respect the law is, surely, a deterrence theory. If people are not deterred, what is the point of the majestic executions?

One suspects that Berns, when elaborating this variant of a deterrence theory, suffered a temporary lapse of memory. How else can one explain his failure to take into account the conclusions of his own third chapter, "The Deterrence Question and the Deterrence Problem"? In that pedestrian discussion, Berns, although obviously sympathetic to the pro-deterrence conclusions of Isaac Ehrlich, nevertheless states unexceptionably, "No one can now say what was regularly said earlier, namely, that it is known that the death penalty is not a more effective deterrent" than life imprisonment. With this moderate remark, Berns has, unbeknownst to himself, admitted that there is no empirical basis whatever for his flights of fancy about His Majesty the Hangman frightening his subjects into submission. Why doesn't agnosticism about deterrence apply to his portrayal of the educative function of the death penalty?

The collapse of Berns's system is truly a fortunate fall. The extent of the restrictions upon individual liberty bound up with it may be gauged from the fact that he cites with approval Lincoln's wish to make a "political religion" out of the U.S. Constitution. (He at one point advances as a serious argument for the death penalty the fact that Lincoln favored it.) He bemoans recent Supreme Court decisions restricting the government's power of censorship and devotes an entire section to complaints about the "unnecessary delay" with which convicted criminals are dispatched. Needless to say, he does not attempt to establish what one's right to a fair trial involves. The reader who considers Berns overly harsh, however, should not despair; there is a treat in store.

The law, he points out, praises as well as blames, as it pursues its teaching office. By this he means that punishment of a criminal "rewards the law-abiding [person] by satisfying the anger he feels at the sight of crime. . . .We are deprived of something very valuable when a criminal escapes punishment, even if he does so by dying." If this is so, then what reward do those of us have coming who are incensed at Berns's travesty of philosophical reasoning and at the swindle of substituting the aggrandizement of the state for the achievement of justice? ❧

GIVING UP THE GUN: Japan's Reversion to the Sword, 1543–1879, by Noel Perrin. Godine, 122 pp., $8.95.

Unilateral disarmament

DAVID BRUDNOY

A FAVORED CONCEIT OF THE West is that of pathetic backwardness of the East, remedied (according to this conception) only by tender, loving Western care and a little bit of force. As a myth this is about as comforting as that of the noble savage, and about as bizarre. Voltaire met head-on the *philosophes'* notion that imperial China was the most wonderful country on earth save for its lack of Christianity, by insisting that China was in fact the most wonderful country on earth *because* of its lack of Christianity. When the West bothered to think of Japan at all it thought of that island kingdom as an appendage to the Chinese empire, as a way station to the riches of the Indies, even occasionally as a pleasant place with gilded streets.

Western ignorance of Japan has only recently been remedied. Even during World War II, America boasted only a few Japanologists among its scholars, and for its most penetrating analysis of the Japanese mind depended on the writing of a clever anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, author of *The Chrysanthemum and The Sword,* who had had no first-hand contact with the enemy. All that has of course been changed of late, as Americans view and tape their "Mork and Mindy" on Japanese products, check the time on their Seikos, and drive to their neighborhood tempura houses in their Subarus and Toyotas, and their

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young risk life and limb on their Hondas and Kawasakis.

Professor Noel Perrin of Dartmouth College stands in the tradition of the gentleman-amateur Japanologist, merrily confessing to ignorance of the language as he bravely wades into the opaque waters of late medieval social history. The odds are against him. He beats the odds, beautifully, in a gracefully written, vastly entertaining, and truly informative monograph about Japan's conscious decision to cast away its firearms and return to the more elegant warfare of the blade. The Japanese had not merely adopted the gun, they had perfected the arts of manufacturing and fighting with guns and cannons, and then, when they had actually surpassed the West in those arts, they elected to do without them.

Strangely enough, the decision didn't noticeably harm the Japanese. Contrary to popular legend, their inward-turning centuries, roughly corresponding with the Tokugawa shogunate of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and first half of the nineteenth centuries, were not stagnant years devoid of civilization or cultural and technological advance; nor was the sudden reappearance of the West in the middle of the last century devastating to the nation. Unlike China, which reacted stupidly to Western imperialism, Japan learned fast, Westernized and modernized with cunning, and soon joined the modern world. Thus the episode Perrin recounts so well was at most an interesting footnote, which explains in large part why it has not previously been so completely detailed, and why the professional Japanologists have not bothered to investigate it.

Perrin has told all that the layman need know about Japanese society to appreciate the unilateral disarmament he describes, and he has caught the flavor of Japanese life in a way that reminds one of the best of the curious foreigners who broke through the Japanese shell in the later years of the last century and came home to recount tales that mystified, or at least puzzled, ethnocentric Westerners. He errs, I believe, in only one small particular, writing that the Japanese have gradually converted to the Western name-order (first name first, family name last). This isn't so. Otherwise, the tale is faultlessly told, and at a time when we are reduced to buying $8.95 paperbacks, it is pleasant to note that it is told in a handsomely printed, neatly illustrated, attractively designed hardback for the same price. ❑

FILM

***YANKS*, directed by John Schlesinger.**

***MORE AMERICAN GRAFFITI*, directed by B.W.L. Norton.**

Keeping the home fires sputtering

STEPHEN HARVEY

TEN YEARS AGO, JOHN Schlesinger enjoyed both high critical esteem and the repute of being a "bankable" director, as they say in the trade, having made his mark as the tongue-clucking Cassandra of soulless mod London (*Darling*) and sordid, randy Manhattan (*Midnight Cowboy*). But he's had rather a bumpy time of it ever since. *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* (1971) is easily his most substantial and satisfying movie to date; it demonstrated that underneath all the pop sociology of his two biggest hits, Schlesinger's acute yet compassionate insight into character and meticulous attention to atmospheric detail had always been his greatest resources as a filmmaker. Unfortunately, *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* was also a considerable financial failure. Many blamed this regretfully on its most apparent virtues; its genteel tone and nonchalant handling of its subject (a bisexual triangle) were deemed too alien to appeal to that elusive abstraction, the Average Moviegoer. (I've wondered how many people went to the film expecting to see bullet-ridden cadavers, only to be confronted with blithe Murray Head commuting between Peter Finch and Glenda Jackson while *Così fan tutte* wafted over the soundtrack.)

Next came *The Day of the Locust,* from the Nathanael West novel, a self-important movie if there ever was one—ponderously literal, humorless, and, in the person of Karen Black in particular, egregiously miscast. Another financial disaster, but fewer mourned the fact this time around. Then, apparently to prove that he could too still make a movie for the masses, Schlesinger came up with the ultimate in pandering, *Marathon Man.* A late entry in that mid-seventies slew of blood-spattered, they're-all-out-to-get-me melodramas, this was an exploitation flick whose bogus air of class came from its imposing cast and some half-baked political implications.

Three years have passed since Schlesinger took such desperate measures to show he could be a mainstream moviemaker. Now, with *Yanks,* he's back on far more familiar and fertile territory. His first film set in England since *Sunday, Bloody Sunday, Yanks* deals with the theme Schlesinger has favored in all his best work: the clash between the basic human need for intimacy and the daily forces—products of the personal quirks and ambitions of the people involved—that frustrate this closeness. On this occasion, the time is World War II and the context the uneasy coexistence between the hordes of American soldiers billeted in England awaiting D-Day, and their bewildered and war-worn hosts.

Viewed in the microcosm of a quaint Yorkshire village, these opposing forces are separated by more than the barrier of a common language, as the old adage about Anglo-American enmity goes. As far as the English are concerned, the Yanks are grasping, abrasive usurpers; according to their restless guests, the natives are ungrateful, inhospitable, and what's more, they smell bad. All this notwithstanding, the inevitable fraternizing ensues, and the film follows two parallel romances, one representing youth, one, early middle age: A GI cook from Arizona (Richard Gere) becomes enamored of the daughter of a local shopkeeper (Lisa Eichhorn), and a worldly American officer (William Devane) keeps company with a tweedy gentlewoman (Vanessa Redgrave) working with the Red Cross. (There's also an alliance between Gere's Italian buddy and a brazen lady bus conductor,

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but they're there strictly for lower-class comic relief.)

IN ITS LEISURELY, EPISODIC fashion, *Yanks* follows these liaisons to their logical culmination as the troops depart for Fortress Europe. As usual, Schlesinger's eye for nuance and contradiction shines in even the briefest vignette. Gere's teatime introduction to Eichhorn's family reveals a range of emotional cross-currents; everyone is uncomfortable, yet unerringly polite, as the antipathy of the girl's mum (Rachel Roberts) to Americans in general clashes silently with Gere's determination to make a good impression. Meanwhile, at Redgrave's stately home, she and Devane play platonic soul mates, chatting about their respective distant spouses while ostentatiously ignoring the sexual tension between them.

Complications abound for both couples, including the inevitable cultural misunderstandings; Gere's casual bigotry after a race riot during a GI dance appalls Eichhorn. Divided loyalties also take their toll: not only Redgrave's absent husband and Eichhorn's fiancé, but also the kind of worries that have little to do with the war per se, the lingering illness afflicting Eichhorn's mother and the misery of Redgrave's son at the exclusive school to which he's been dispatched.

As is expected from Schlesinger, the cast he's assembled does its utmost to extract every ounce of poignancy from the situation. In the case of the two male stars, they're hampered somewhat by their familiar limitations as actors. In a sympathetic role, for a change, William Devane can't call upon the single-minded malevolence that is his most evident quality, but, vulpine grin intact, he is moderately effective anyway. And Schlesinger has somehow managed to temper that snotty narcissism that Gere has always heretofore displayed on screen; even with his Mosholu Parkway diction, Gere works awfully hard to convey the rueful innocence of this Southwesterner out of his element.

As for the women, Redgrave hasn't given such a relaxed, unmannered performance in a long time, and she's immensely likable as the serene aristocrat bred to rise to any contingency. (One particularly delicious moment—her first encounter with an American slot machine: Redgrave's eyes blaze with resolve to conquer the thing, come what may.) In her film debut, Eichhorn demonstrates an uncloying simplicity that could scarcely be improved upon. Moreover, she's done her homework—though American born, she's mastered the requisite Yorkshire burr surpassingly well.

Well-acted, literate, and observant, *Yanks* boasts a sheaf of those quiet virtues rare to movies of late. Yet in the end all those noble refinements don't suffice when the material is as inert as *Yanks* turns out to be; a little crass energy mightn't have been amiss after all. Having chosen a worthy premise, Schlesinger and his screen writers Colin Welland and Walter Bernstein resisted—all too successfully, as it happens—the vulgar temptation to jack it up to a well-calibrated climax. There is little momentum in the story because after the the first half-hour or so the dynamics of these two relationships don't change much. Nor is there much left to learn about the characters once they've first been introduced. As representatives of their respective nations and social classes they've been intelligently rendered, to be sure, but they haven't been endowed with the dimensions necessary to make them distinctive or memorable as individuals.

The pervasive blandness that results is only reinforced by the look and sound of the film; Dick Bush's Breck ad–like camerawork and the relentless bombast of Richard Rodney Bennett's score belong in a movie romance from the forties, not a penetrating study of wartime travail. I can admire Schlesinger's refusal to condescend to his audience, all the more so when everyone concerned has taken such obvious pains to avoid facile gimmickry while trying to be true to the human relations traced in the film. The pity is that for all its worthy purpose, *Yanks* is admirable more for what it doesn't do than for what it actually achieves.

NO ONE WOULD EVER accuse those who made *More American Graffiti* of lofty aims—obviously, all they had in mind was to capitalize on the open-ended finale of its popular predecessor. Any fans of the original still eager to learn the fate of those endearing hot-rodding naifs should stay at home and think up their own conclusions—chances are that whatever they hit on is bound to be more original than what this film offers. As it turns out, *American Graffiti*'s erstwhile protagonists react to the social convulsions of the midsixties with programmed predictability, the one enigma being the absence of the character formerly played by Richard Dreyfuss, who is now presumably too choosy and high-priced (and smart) to be implicated in such an enterprise. Candy Clark, once a platinum-tressed good-time girl, is now a red-haired San Francisco chick communally cohabiting with an unworthy guitar player; hyperthyroid nerd Charles Martin Smith has become Vietnam artillery fodder; benign delinquent Paul Le Mat hot rods to oblivion; and strait-laced sweethearts Cindy Williams and Ron Howard settle down as sub-

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urban newlyweds battling à la Lucy and Desi over her wish to get out of the house and take a job.

More American Graffiti doesn't evoke the dominant motifs of the period; it merely trivializes them with a few knee-jerk visual references. Choppers cast shadows over swampy green landscapes, hippies gyrate midst Day-Glo psychedelia, cops batter kids in a tear-gas haze, all to the endless sound montage of a medley of blasts from the past that have only a random connection (ironic or otherwise) to the images they're welded to.

Sensing perhaps how obvious this would seem without distractions, author-director B.W.L. Norton opted to tell his story in the most arbitrarily fragmented method imaginable. Whereas the first *American Graffiti* took place entirely within the span of one day, this time around each of the characters undergoes his or her mini-epiphany within a different twelve-hour span—on successive New Year's Eves from 1964 to 1967 that are frantically intermingled in the film editor's Cuisinart.

Usually this device is merely exasperating. Since each wayward incident is as banal as the next, it's hard to care much when you're suddenly whisked ahead two years for a glimpse of Cindy Williams in the paddy wagon, only to slide back to 1964 to watch Paul Le Mat's triumph on the dragstrip. What's offensive is the attempt to use this as a cheap suspense-building device. Early on Candy Clark casually mentions the demises of Smith (in 1965) and Le Mat (in 1964), so that every time they appear thereafter, you wonder whether it's going to be the last time.

Norton's visual filigrees are just as self-conscious as his attempts to transcend the classical unities. For the Vietnam sequences he reduces the screen to home-tube dimensions (Vietnam was a war fought and lost on television; get it?), while the Haight-Ashbury cum Fillmore routine unfolds via split-screen psychedelia so prismatic that often you can't even tell what's happening. All these redundant media in-jokes hardly obscure how arid the inspiration was behind this whole enterprise. The sole consolation is that, if the audience reaction at the screening I caught means anything, we'll probably never find out if Cindy and Ron ever got heavily into Sensitivity Training or whether Candy finally embraced her destiny and became a Moonie. ❑

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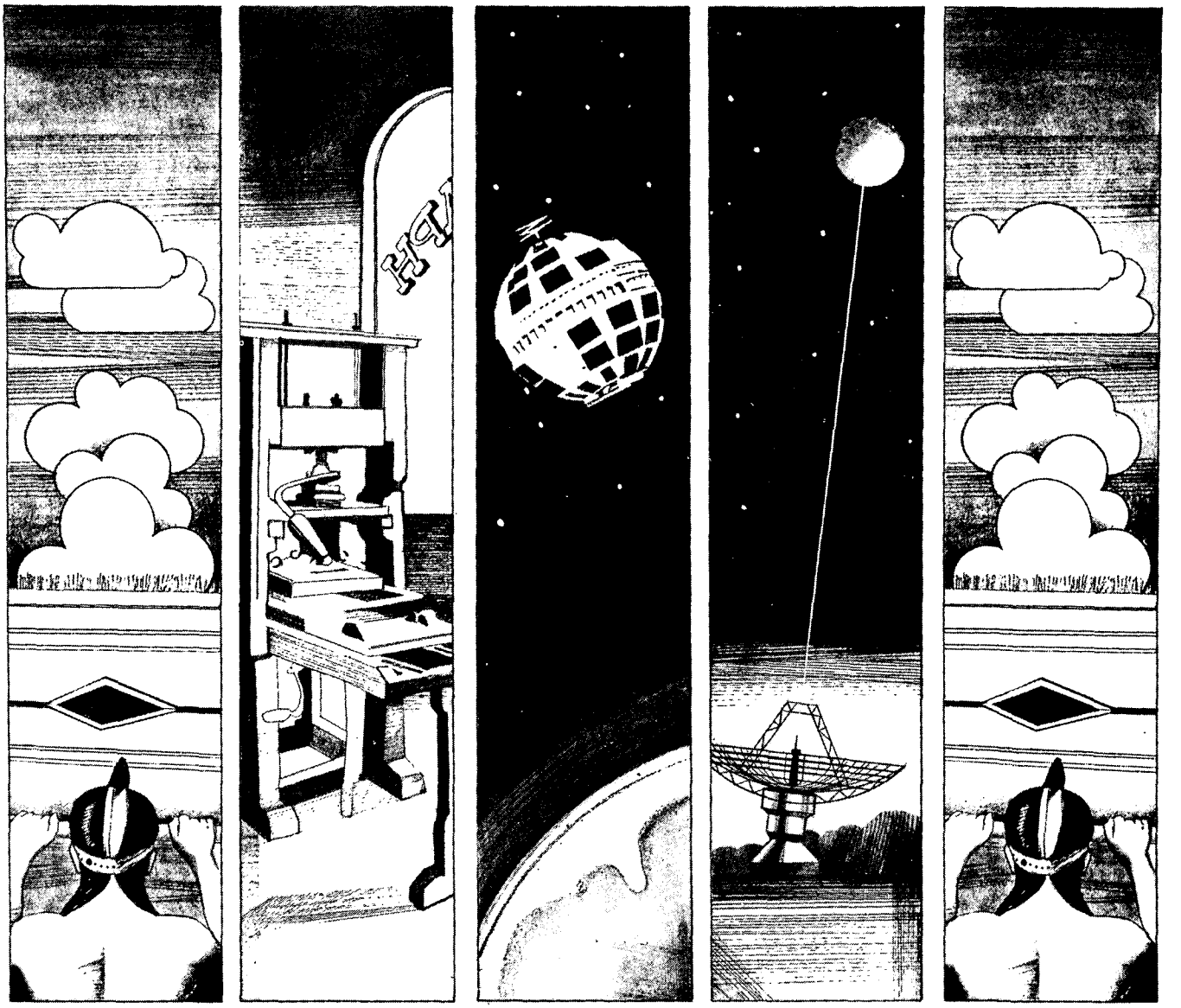

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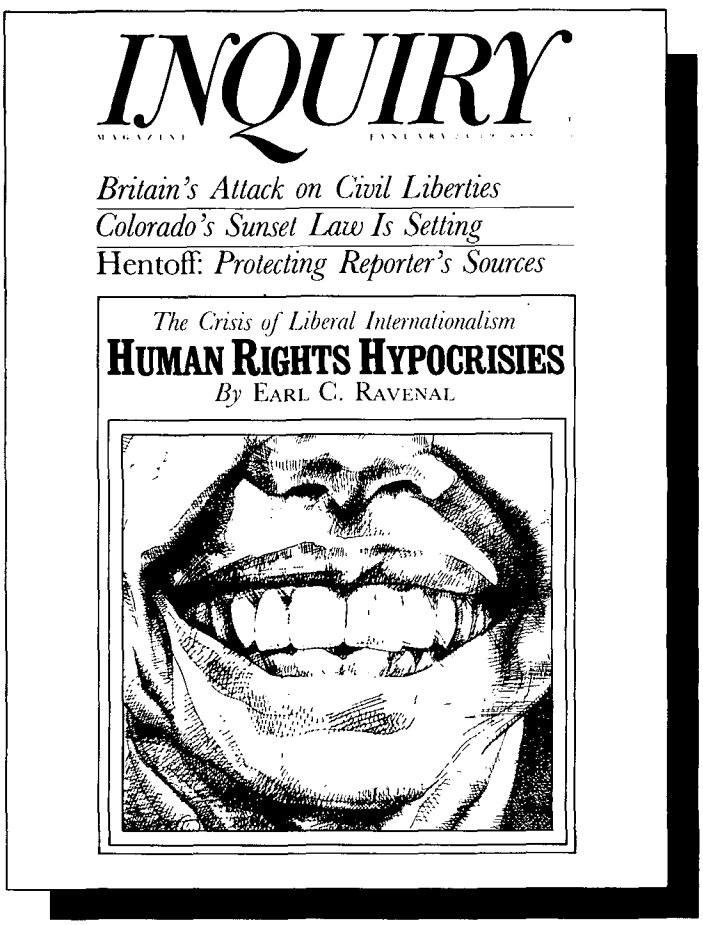

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